# SIX SACRAMENTS

PAPERS READ AT THE SUMMER SCHOOL OF CATHOLIC STUDIES, CAMBRIDGE, 1929

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SIX SACRAMENTS

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# SIX SACRAMENTS

*Being Papers on the Sacraments in General, Baptism, Confirmation, Penance, Holy Orders, Matrimony, and Extreme Unction*

Read at the

SUMMER SCHOOL OF CATHOLIC STUDIES

held at Cambridge, July 27—August 5, 1929

Edited by

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FIRST PUBLISHED JULY, 1930, BY
SHEED & WARD,
31 PATERNOSTER ROW,
LONDON, E.C.4

## EDITOR'S PREFACE

The papers in this book treat of six sacraments, and of the general nature of sacraments; the Holy Eucharist is omitted, as having been the general subject of the Summer School of 1922. Without this separate treatment of so vast a theme it would have been impossible to take the sacraments as a general subject.

In the matter of the sacraments it is not primarily a question of what the Church teaches, but of what she does; and more than this, of what she always has done and always will do. She insists upon her children submitting to her action. Her infallibility is involved because of the teaching that goes to explain that action. We study first and foremost the facts, while considering carefully how the Church has understood them; from this root of actual practice and authoritative explanation has been and is being developed a further body of doctrine and theological opinion. But the explanation and the doctrine may be said to have lagged somewhat behind the facts. We know for certain, if only from our faith, that from the beginning the Church was always *doing* the right thing; but it may be said roughly that the theology of the sacraments dates from the age of the Schoolmen. The Fathers in the main take the sacraments for granted, bestowing their intellectual labour on matters more fundamental. At the present time the study of the facts has strongly



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reasserted itself, and it will be seen from the following papers that this study has tended to modify the opinions of theologians in matters not essential. In general it may be said that the modern tendency is to allow a wider field to the power of the Church in regard of the sacraments. The most striking instance of this, based on Pope Eugenius's *Decretum pro Armenis* at the Council of Florence in 1439, would doubtless be that the tradition of instruments should have become an essential part of the sacramental matter of Orders in the Latin rite. But this opinion is much disputed, and does not find favour in this book with those to whom it falls to discuss it.

What the Church does, Almighty God does. He not only guarantees the sacramental teaching of the Church, but gives the sacraments their virtue. He has bound Himself to act, so that in virtue of His faithfulness to His promises the sacraments have a claim upon His divine action. He is pledged to the giving of sanctifying grace and of actual graces, and of all those particular effects for which the sacraments were instituted. He acts therefore upon man. The action of the sacraments may be described as action downward from God to man, being in this way opposite to sacrifice, which may be called action upward from man to God. Sacrifice and sacrament thus differ essentially in nature and effect, so that it is hazardous to argue from one to the other. The offering of sacrifice (which in the New Testament is Holy Mass) appeases God, and in return He gives His graces, but graces moving to the sacraments and embracing them. God, if we are to speak strictly, remains unchanged and unchangeable in Himself, but there is a true effect upon His action towards men,

which action in large measure works through the sacraments.

This is not magic. For a good idea of what is generally meant by magic, we cannot do better than to go to Murray's Dictionary, that vast and invaluable store of correct English. It is there defined as 'the pretended act of influencing the course of events, and of producing marvellous physical phenomena by processes supposed to owe their efficacy to their power of compelling the intervention of spiritual beings, or of bringing into operation some occult controlling principle of nature.' Here we have a definition free from all suspicion of ulterior motives, free from that poisoning of the wells which comes from the modernist way of perverting traditional terms to cover novel and subversive doctrines, into which the uninitiated are thus enticed unawares.

Now in the case of the sacraments it cannot be said with any reasonable element of truth that there is an attempt to influence the course of events, or to produce marvellous physical phenomena, or to compel the intervention of spiritual beings, or to bring into operation some occult controlling principle of nature. God does not suffer compulsion; He is merely keeping His promises. Dr. Gavin has well insisted on the significance of this aspect of the matter, in a passage which I quote in my own paper (p. 77). To call such divine action magic is to bring confusion into the scientific study of religions, no less than to slander Christianity. For indeed, as Dr. Darwell Stone recently showed in his presidential address to the Oxford Society of Historical Theology (1926), if we take the sacramental principle in a wider sense—too wide for the true Catholic definition of a sacrament,

and yet sufficiently near it to fall under the same condemnation—it has always had its place hitherto in practically all the forms of Christianity. The Salvation Army is perhaps the most remarkable exception, in trying to combine belief in the Bible with a rejection even of Baptism and the Holy Eucharist.

It is all too evident that modernist conceptions of the sacraments are largely based upon a totally inadequate conception of God, of His freedom of choice and of His infinite power. This weakening of belief in a personal God is one of the terrible diseases of our own time, to which the next Summer School will seek in its measure to bring a remedy, by taking "God" as the general subject. There also I hope to show that the modernist method of religious experience is the wrong approach to God and things divine; nevertheless (subject to reservations then to be explained) it may be well here to indicate the sacraments as the religious experience given us officially (so to speak) by the Church of God. From the purely natural standpoint they are found admirably to suit our human nature, sustaining us in the great crises of life no less than in our daily trials; but this does not prove them, for they are gifts far outstripping our needs, and work effects that in the main escape our observation.

The greatest experience of all, as it is the most divine of all the gifts, being in fact the God-man Himself, is the Holy Eucharist, to which all the other sacraments look, as being that very life which they have been instituted to give or to increase. They have each their own special function, the primary end to which their conferring of grace may be said in a certain sense to be subordinated; but the Holy

Eucharist has no such peculiar sacramental purpose of its own, no such departmental limitation, if I may call it such, but only grace as such. To end this preface, therefore, upon the topic that began it, the present papers require the previous volume upon the Holy Eucharist to complete them; and it may be hoped that those who have followed the present course will return with a fuller understanding and love to the Sacrament that surpasses all.

My hearty thanks are due to the Rev. Francis Smith, S.J., for indexing this and another book for me.

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# THE INSTITUTION OF THE SACRAMENTS

By the Rev. Hugh Pope, O.P., S.T.M., Doct. S.S.

## I: SACRAMENTS IN THE OLD LAW AND THE NEW

The word *sacrament* denotes something holy or sacred. But there is a great advance on this elementary idea when we define the Christian sacraments as "outward signs of inward grace, instituted by Christ, whereby grace is given to our souls".[1] Primarily the word *sacrament* and the Greek μυστήριον (Vulgate Latin *mysterium*, *secretum* or *sacramentum*),[2] mean something hidden: "It is good," says Tobias, "to hide the secret

[1] This is the familiar Catechism answer derived from the *Catechism of the Council of Trent*, which defines "Sacrament" as "*res subjecta sensibus quae ex Dei institutione sanctitatis et justitiae tum significandae tum etiam efficiendae vim habet*"; that is, "a thing apparent to the senses and having by God's appointment the power not only of signifying but also of effecting holiness and righteousness."

[2] *E.g. Wisd.* ii, 22, vi, 24, xii, 5, where the Latin has *consecratio*; *Dan.* ii, 18-47 where we have now *mysterium*, now *secretum*, now *sacramentum: Amos* iii, 7. Thus at times the Creed itself is termed a "sacrament" (*sacramentum symboli*, St. Augustine, *De Catechizandis Rudibus*, 13); so too the Liturgy (St. Optatus, *De Schismate Donatistarum*, ii and vi, St. Augustine, *De Dono Perseverantiae*, 13). Much in the same way the Latins spoke of an oath or *jusjurandum* as *sacramentum*, since it meant the calling of some sacred thing or person to witness.

"*Mysterium appellatur cum alia inspicimus, alia credimus*," St. Chrysostom, *Hom.* vii *in I Cor.* And again: "*Sancta exercitia sunt* [*Sacramenta*] *quae certiorem verbi Dei fidem nobis faciunt: et quia carnales sumus, sub rebus carnalibus exhibentur, ut ita pro tarditatis nostrae captu nos erudiant, et perinde ac pueros pedagogi manu ducant.*" St. Augustine, *Tract.* lxxxvi *in Joann.*

(*sacramentum*) of a king."[1] In the New Testament this "secret" is that of the King of Kings, those "mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven" which were to be hidden from the heathen but not from the Apostles.[2] For St. Paul this "mystery" is manifold: now it is the Incarnation of the Son of God,[3] now the "blindness" of Israel[4] regarding the incorporation of the heathen into the Church of Christ,[5] now the Gospel-preaching in general;[6] finally the spiritual union between Christ and His Church.[7]

As was only to be expected, the Reformers violently assailed this traditional teaching of the Church on the nature of sacraments. They could not repudiate the doctrine that they were in some sense signs, but they did succeed in reducing their significative aspect to a minimum and so robbing the sacraments of all objective significance. Thus Jewel defines a sacrament as "an outward and visible sign whereby God sealeth up His grace in our hearts, to the confirmation of our faith."[8] "Are they then," he asks, "nothing else but bare and naked signs? God forbid. They are the seals of God, heavenly tokens, and signs of the grace, and righteousness, and mercy given and imputed to us."[9] In the same sense Hooper writes to Bucer:

> "You cannot believe the sacraments to be bare signs. Far be such a belief from the most unlearned Christian! The holy supper is not a bare sign, neither in it is the true and natural body of Christ

[1] xii, 7. [2] *Mt.* xiii, 11; *Mk.* iv, 11; *Lk.* viii, 10. [3] *I Tim.* iii, 9, the *mysterium fidei;* iii, 16; *Tit.* ii, 13; *cf. Rom.* xvi, 25. [4] *Rom.* xvi, 25. [5] *Eph.* iii, 6; *cf.* ch. ii throughout; vi, 19; *Col.* iv, 3; *cf.* i, 26; ii, 2. [6] *I Cor.* ii, 7; *Col.* iv, 3. [7] *Eph.* v, 32.

[8] *A Treatise on the Sacraments,* ed. Parker Soc. p. 1099.

[9] *Ibid.* p. 1101.

corporally exhibited to me in any supernatural or heavenly manner; nevertheless, I religiously and with all honour venerate and reverence the institution of Christ upon other grounds: because it is a sign of the good will of God to me, and an outward testimony added to the promise of grace. Not that this promise is applied to me by means of any sacrament, but because the promise previously applied to me by faith is thereby confirmed. . . Thus the holy supper is a testimony of grace, and a mystery of our redemption, in which God bears witness to the benefits bestowed upon us by Christ; not that the remission of sins, which in believers ought to precede all use of sacraments, is there applied; nor that the true body of Christ, which is in heaven and not on earth, is exhibited together with the bread; but that it may confirm that faith which I have in the death and passion of that body which was alive, died, and rose again. And the minister gives what is in his power, namely, the bread and wine, and not the body of Christ; nor is it exhibited by the minister, and eaten by the communicant, otherwise than in the word preached, read, or meditated upon. And to eat the body of Christ is nothing else than to believe, as he himself teaches in the sixth of John. It is necessary therefore to bring Christ to the sacraments by faith, and not to look for him there."[1]

Even more repugnant, if possible, to these innovators was the notion that the sacraments could effect anything. Yet that of course had been the idea in which hitherto all good Catholics had been brought up, so that Hooper appears to have thrown somewhat of a

[1] June 19th, 1548; *Original Letters*, Parker Society; I, p. 47.

bombshell into Edward's Council when he maintained against them that the sacraments did not *confer* grace. "He wished," wrote Micronius to Bullinger, "the word *confer* to be changed into *seal* or *testify*."[1]

What then, it will be asked, is the basis of the Church's definition of a sacrament as an outward sign enshrining a doctrine and in some way conveying grace to the soul?

When we reflect upon those "mysteries of God" of which St. Paul has spoken we find that of none save the Incarnation can it be said that they are tangible things, things, that is, which appeal to the senses; they are doctrines rather than rites. We said "save the Incarnation" because that mystery is not only something which came under men's senses (*I Jn.* i, 1-3), but in it is comprised the whole of religion, the sum total of doctrine and the whole source of our knowledge of wherein lies true holiness. This is the "mystery" which has direct application to all peoples, which in the centuries that preceded had been foreshadowed in a host of lesser mysteries, and which was therefore only revealed in its completeness when the fulness of time had come. Hence the Incarnation can truly be termed the Mystery of mysteries or the Sacrament of sacraments; and consequently we seem to have in it something whereby we can test the "sacramental" character of other things.

To begin with, the Incarnation was not merely something external, tangible, the object of the senses;[2] it was also a sign of something beyond itself, the grace or favour of God towards the human race. It

[1] May, 23rd 1550; *Original Letters*, p. 563.
[2] *I Jn.* i, 1-3.

is in this sense that Christ describes Himself as "sent," as the "Advocate," as "the Way, the Truth and the Life," or, as St. Peter expresses it, "there is no other Name whereby we can be saved."

Again, the Incarnation is not an end in itself, though Christ as the Incarnate Word of God is "the end of the Law." Its real end and aim, its whole purpose, is the sanctification or final salvation of us men; it is in this sense that the Incarnation is a sign. Not, of course, that it is a mere sign-post, simply a landmark in history, an event that was and is not, something pointing out the way but itself standing still, doing its work precisely by doing nothing. No, this "sign that shall be contradicted" is itself a cause of the grace which it signifies: "power has gone out from me," said Christ, when the infirm woman touched Him.

It follows that all sacraments are such in accordance with their relation to Christ; and this whether we regard Him as promised in the Old Testament or as depicted in the New as having already come "to be with us unto the consummation of the world." When, then, we ask whether there are in the Old or New Testaments things which can truly be described as sacraments we are really asking whether there are discoverable in those narratives (*a*) indications of things which were signs of some spiritual grace or favour of God, (*b*) whether, as such, they had the power to sanctify men, and (*c*) whether this is by reason of some peculiar relation they bear to Christ.

That something corresponding to the notion of sacraments must have existed under the old law seems clear. For "since all our salvation is through Christ (*Rom.* iii, 25) there must have been—even

before His coming—certain visible signs whereby men might make profession of their faith in a Saviour to come. Since such signs are called sacraments it is clear that, before the coming of Christ, sacraments must have been instituted by God."[1] "The Law and the Prophets until John the Baptist," says St. Augustine, "had their sacraments fore-announcing some future thing; and they bear witness that the sacraments of our time have really come, for they foretold that they would come. Hence the Lord Himself said: 'Many just men and prophets have desired to see the things that you see and have not seen them'; for of a truth the holy men and the prophets of those older days yearned to see completed what, by the revelation of the Holy Spirit, they saw would come to pass."[2]

But while in a very true sense all persons and things in the Old Testament are figurative of Christ and His Kingdom, it will not follow that all such are sacraments; for while all refer to Christ, who is essentially holy, *sanctus*, not all refer to Him as the source of our sanctification, that is as *sanctifying*, and it is in this latter sense particularly that we speak of sacraments.

Moreover, the Fall of Man and the consequent promise of a Redeemer would seem to necessitate the existence of certain outward material signs whereby men might give expression to their belief in the coming of such a Redeemer. According as the law of nature, impressed on the human mind by the Creator, lost the first freshness of that impress; according as the sense of sin decayed and men fell further and further

[1] *Sum. Theol.* iii, q.61, a.3.
[2] *Contra Litt. Petiliani*, ii, 87.

away from God their First Cause and their Last End, so that same law of nature gradually lost its corrective power. As the time of the Redeemer's coming drew nigh some fuller sense of men's faith in Him, and therefore of the need for more adequate expression of it, was called for.[1]

Now if there really were such sacraments under the Old Dispensation we should expect to discover them among the sacrificial and ritual enactments which were the distinguishing features of the Old Law. What, for instance, was the significance of the morning and evening sacrifice of a lamb? What precise effect on ministers and assistants alike could attendance at that sacrifice have had?

These sacrifices of the Old Law were clearly signs, for they prefigured something. Nor is it enough to say that they were signs, in that they expressed the mental attitude of the worshippers towards God, "the Giver of all good gifts." For then this mental attitude of those who assisted, and not the sacrificial act itself, would be the sign; and that mental attitude might have been equally well expressed by a multitude of other actions or by the sacrifice of some other animal than a lamb. Moreover though such relationship is nowhere explicitly stated in the Old Testament, the Apostles and Evangelists saw in these sacrifices signs or figures of Christ the Supreme Victim,[2] prefigurements of His final sacrifice for sin.

[1] See St. Thomas, *Sum. Theol.* iii, q.61, a.3, *ad* 2; St. Augustine, *Ep.* cxxxviii, 7.

[2] Thus St. John explicitly: "these things were done that the Scripture might be fulfilled, 'Ye shall not break a bone of Him,'" xix, 36; so too St. Paul, who speaks of the 'figurative' character of all these things, *I Cor.* x, 1-6, for he regards them as "the weak and beggarly elements," *Gal.* iv, 9-10, "the shadow of things to come," *Col.* ii, 16-17; *cf. Lk.* xxiv, 25-27, 44-46.

These sacrifices, then, have the first essential for a sacrament—they were "signs of some sacred thing."

But the real problem is: in what sense could these Old Testament signs or figures be said to sanctify men? For a sacrament is defined as "a sacred sign whereby grace or sanctification is communicated to our souls". Clearly no one could have habitually assisted at those sacrifices without some sense of their figurative character, in other words, without faith in that which they signified; faith, that is, in the Redemptive Death of Christ which was one day to take place. And the very faith which caused them so to assist was itself an effect of such habitual assistance, as we see in Simeon and Anna, who must have been but types of countless other holy souls of the period.[1]

It will be equally clear that the mere sacrifice itself, the offering of a thing which had no intrinsic holiness, could never have sanctified those who assisted at it. The same applies to the rite of circumcision, also to the baptism administered by John; for it was not the ritual practice that sanctified but the faith or repentance of which that rite was the outward expression. The Baptist himself clearly states this when he says: "I baptise you with water, but He shall baptise you with the Holy Ghost and with fire," that is, with something operative of itself. From this it appears that no rite in the Old Dispensation was sacramental in the fullest sense of the term, since, though significative, it was not of itself sanctificative.

Passing now to the Christian sacraments, to those of

[1] Thus St. Augustine is not afraid to say of those who ate the manna in the desert that "there were there some who understood what they were eating, some to whom Christ was more in their hearts than the manna was in their mouths," *Sermo.* cclii, 3; the whole passage should be read.

the New Law, can we say that there is any proof that under the new Dispensation, the Law of Grace, Christ, "the End of the Law," its consummator as well as its goal, instituted rites and ceremonies which, in addition to being significative of the Divine favour and manifestive of the faith of those who shared in them, should also be effective in themselves of that very favour or grace? For only if this is the case can we speak of the sacraments of the Christian Church as being more than signs, and really effective of what they signify.

In the first place it will be conceded that the rites and ceremonies, the sacraments if you will, of the New Law must in some sort transcend those of the older and purely figurative Dispensation. Yet the splendour of those latter is evidenced by the fact that they sufficed to hold Judaism together for long centuries and begot in the temple-worshippers an enthusiasm which has never known a parallel. The gorgeous character of that ritual had made it famous throughout the known world; potentates from Babylon, Assyria, Macedonia and Rome were proud to share in it—so far as was possible. It is hard, then, to discover in what precisely lay the supereminence of the Christian sacraments unless it be that they were more than signs, in that they actually effected what they signified. St. Augustine's answer to Faustus on this point is well known; the sacraments of the New Law, he says, are in comparison with those of the Old "*virtute majora, utilitate meliora, actu faciliora, numero pauciora.*"[1]

And this is born out by the fact that under the Old Dispensation we can discern dim foreshadowings of the greater things to come. Thus we read of confession

[1] *Contra Faustum* xix, 13.

of sin with the accompanying atoning sacrifice,[1] whil Baptism is prefigured in circumcision, which was to be superseded later by the greater rite.[2] Similarly the Holy Eucharist finds its prototype in the manna,[3] Confirmation in the promised outpouring of the Holy Spirit.[4] Matrimony—always a sacrament of nature—is elevated by Christ to the dignity of a Christian sacrament.[5] Order appears in the consecration of the Levitical priests.[6] Of Extreme Unction alone there seems to be no prototype.

The Reformers insisted that it was faith and faith alone that justified a man. In the sense that faith alone opens the door to charity and good works—to love of God in whom we believe, and to works done out of love of that God in whom we believe—their position is perfectly sound. But here it is essentially a question of faith not merely in the existence of God and His mercy ("He that cometh to God must believe that He is, and is a rewarder of them that seek Him," *Heb.* xi, 6), but of faith in that particular proof of the mercy of God which is the Incarnation, or God made man for our sakes. Now it matters not whether that faith be concerned with Christ to come—as in the case of those under the Old Law, or with Christ who has already come—as with Christians. In both cases that faith is fittingly expressed by the use of sacraments, whether those of the Old Dispensation for those who lived under it, or those of the Christian Dispensation for those born under it. If it be asked, then, why the sacraments of the Old Law should not be able to confer or effect the grace which they signify, as do those of the New Law, the answer can best be

[1] *Num.* v, 5-8. [2] *Ezech.* xxxvi, 25; *Zach.* xiii, 1-2. [3] *Exod.* xvi. [4] *Ezech.* xi, 19, xxxvi, 16-17. [5] *Gen.* iii. [6] *Lev.* viii.

stated by saying that an object or goal for which I work—for example, becoming a fully-qualified accountant or a consulting physician—can indeed induce me to work, but until that goal is actually secured, and has become for me an actually existing thing, I am not in a position to enjoy it, precisely because it does not yet exist but is rather in a state of becoming; in other words, it does not actually effect or produce anything in me save a desire of what as yet is not. But a really effective cause—one which truly brings things into being—must actually exist previous to the effects which it brings about. Now Christ—the effective cause of the sacraments of the New Law—does actually exist for those under that New Dispensation; in other words, in Him the Son of God has actually become man, and by the actual use of His sacraments we express our faith in His Passion and Redemptive Death which have really come to pass; and by that faith we are justified.[1]

Lastly, to understand what is meant by the phrase *effect what they signify*, it is necessary to bear in mind the four very different causes that can be assigned to things: (*a*) the material cause or that out of which they are made and which still remains in them, *e.g.*, the wood out of which the table is made—the material cause of the sacraments will be the material used, *i.e.*, water, wine, oil, bread, *etc.*, (*b*) the final cause or the object which motived its making—this in the case of the sacraments will be our final sanctification or salvation; (*c*) the effective cause which actually gives them their nature, whether directly or through the medium or instrumentality of other agents—thus the carpenter makes or effects the table, but he uses tools

[1] See St. Thomas, *Sum. Theol.* iii, q.62, a.6.

or instruments for this purpose; in the sacraments the effective cause is the Passion of Christ, the instrumental causes are the matter and form, or the outward signs used in the sacraments themselves as applied by properly constituted ministers whom Christ employs for the making of the sacraments and their distribution to the people; (*d*) lastly, there is the formal cause of things, that which makes them precisely what they are and not something else—in the case of the sacraments this varies in each, for the designation of certain material things as signs of some particular grace or effect depends on the words used in the making of each sacrament: "*accedit verbum ad elementum et fit sacramentum*," says St. Augustine.[1]

## II: THE NUMBER OF THE SACRAMENTS

To us the number seven when speaking of the sacraments is traditional, and that the sacraments of the New Law are neither more nor less than seven in number is of faith. But while references to all seven are to be found in the New Testament it is nowhere said that they are seven in number.[2] Nor does any Father of the Church make any such statement; still less shall we find in their writings treatises *On the Seven Sacraments* or *On the Sacraments in General*. It would probably be true to say that no Father explicitly mentions more than four or possibly five out of the seven, though their combined testimonies afford

[1] *Tract.* lxxx *in Joann.*

[2] This should not surprise us, for though ten Commandments, and seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit are enumerated in the Bible, we never read there of the "*Ten* Commandments" nor of the "*Seven* Gifts."

evidence for all seven.[1] This reticence was probably due to a variety of causes. The "discipline of the secret," for example, was a very real thing, and explicit references to these mysteries was felt to be inadvisable.[2] Moreover the Fathers wrote in defence of the faith; their works were for the most part apologetic, and arose out of the controversies in which they found themselves engaged. Hence while they deal voluminously with Baptism and the Holy Eucharist as the two cardinal sacraments, they are for the most part silent regarding the others, or at most they mention them quite incidentally.[3]

The first explicit statement to the effect that the sacraments are seven in number seems to be found in the *Catechism* of St. Bruno of Bamberg dating from 1127; but from that date onwards we have a series of testimonies to what was evidently regarded as an accepted doctrinal fact.[4] Hence when the Fathers of Trent found themselves faced with the heretical Reformers'

[1] Thus see St. Augustine, *De Baptismo contra Donatistas*, V, vi, 7 for the sacrament of Order, similarly *ibid.* III, xvi, 21 for Confirmation; for Extreme Unction note "*Sacramentum Chrismatis . . . quod quidem in genere visibilium signaculorum sacrosanctum est, sicut ipse Baptismus*," *Contra Litt. Petiliani*, II, civ. (239). Some of the Tridentine Fathers referred to his *De Visitatione Infirmorum*, ii, 4; but this is not Augustine's, nor is its date certain. Its teaching on the Viaticum, on the Last Anointing, and the need of auricular confession, is extraordinarily precise, and it would be of interest to ascertain its date.

[2] See St. Chrysostom, *Hom.* xl *in I Cor.*, 1; also St. Augustine, *Tract.* xcvi, 3 *in Joann.*, at the end.

[3] Thus St. Augustine speaks of the two sacraments of Baptism and the Holy Eucharist very much as though there were no others, *De Doctrina Christiana*, III, ix.

[4] The formal treatises on the Sacraments in general may be said to have begun with Hugh of St. Victor (*d.* 1141), though of course long before that we have the *De Sacramentis*, constantly attributed to St. Ambrose and almost certainly dating from the fifth century; still this can hardly be called a formal treatise. The more or less mystical argument for the number seven is given by St. Thomas, *Sum. Theol.* iii, q.65, a.1, and much the same arguments were used at Trent by Antonius Solisius in the Congregation of Minor Theologians, 26th January, 1547, see *Concilium*

contention that the sevenfold sacraments were a fiction and had no warrant in Scripture or tradition, they could argue that the doctrine was in possession and was the mind of the Church[1] as already sufficiently declared by the Councils of Constance (1420) and Florence (1438).[2]

The Reformers, by insisting that there were but two Christian sacraments, compelled the Fathers of Trent to reiterate the age-long teaching of the Church on the subject. It is not at first sight clear why the Reformers were so anxious to reduce the number of the sacraments. But they seem to have been driven to do so by the logic of their appeal to Scripture as the sole arbiter of what was of faith. For, as Jewel points out, there are two features in every sacrament —the element, and Christ's institution of the use of it as a sacrament. The elements used in our seven sacraments may be noted in the New Testament, but of only Baptism and the Holy Eucharist do we read there that Christ instituted them as sacraments.[3] The Catholic controversialists of course appealed to the authority of the Church as alone able to decide the question; to discover what was the mind of the Church on the point they turned to the Fathers. To what straits the Reformers were put in their endeavours to evade the witness of the Fathers appears repeatedly in the pages of the interminable controversies, especially in those between Jewel and Harding. Thus because SS. Ambrose and Augustine single out Baptism

*Tridentinum, Actorum pars altera*, p. V, p. 865. For the treatment of the number seven as sacrosanct, see St. Augustine, *De Genesi ad. litt.*, v, 15. "*Septenarium numerum Sancto Spiritui quodammodo dedicatum commendat Scriptura et novit Ecclesia*," *P.L.* xxxiv, 326.

[1] Session xv, 8.

[2] The Decree of Pope Eugenius for the Armenians.

[3] *A Treatise on the Sacraments*, 1103, ed. Parker Soc.

and the Eucharist, Jewel draws the illicit conclusion: "Augustine and Ambrose, unto whom I might also join other ancient fathers, reckon but two sacraments."[1] Extreme Unction he rejects[2] on the ground that since the grace of healing had ceased, so too the sacrament of healing! That Augustine did not believe in the sacrament of Penance Jewel proves[3] from his remark: "What have I to do with men that they should hear my confessions?" where the reference—as Jewel well knew—is to Augustine's famous *Confessions*.[4]

Finally they were driven to the essentially Protestant position that "Whatsoever was then taught, contrary to that we teach for matter of faith, cannot be proved by Scripture";[5] or that "the Fathers then used the name of sacrifice unproperly for the celebration of the Communion";[6] and even more explicitly, "Our judgment of all old writers [he is speaking of Lactantius] is this: that whatsoever they speak contrary to the truth of the Holy Scriptures, we may boldly reject it; whatsoever they say agreeable unto them, we do willingly admit it."[7]

At the same time some of the Tridentine Fathers felt that the proposition, "the Church's sacraments are not seven in number, but they may be fewer or more in number that can rightly be called sacraments," should not be condemned as it stood, but only the first part, while the latter clause should be left as it was at

[1] *Ibid.*

[2] *Ibid.* 1136. Fulke, when compelled by Stapleton to recognise the practice in Ven. Bede, IV, 3 and 24, was content to reply, "Yes, but it is not therefore necessary." Stapleton's *Fortresse Overthrown*, p. 11, ed. Parker Soc., *Fulke's Answers*. In his *Rejoinder to Martiall* Fulke repeats Jewel's statement that such healings were over, iv, p. 170, *ibid.*

[3] *A Treatise on the Sacraments*, ed. Parker, 1134.

[4] *Confessions*, X, iii, 3.

[5] Fulke, *Stapleton's Fortresse*, ii, 2, p. 75.

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 86. [7] Fulke, *Rejoinder to Martiall*, iii, p. 156.

Florence.[1] But this was resisted by the General of the Carmelites, who argued very convincingly that if "it is false to say they are not seven in number—as it evidently is when you consider all the sacraments of which the Church's doctors have spoken, and when you remember the authority of the Church and the creeds of all the orthodox which all declare that the sacraments are seven in number—then it is absurd to say that 'they be may fewer or more in number'."[2]

The General of the Carmelites referred to the beliefs of all the Orthodox, meaning presumably the separated Churches of the East. Now though the East and West were not in agreement on many doctrinal points it is remarkable that neither at Lyons in 1274 nor at Florence in 1438, where diversities of rites were fully acknowledged, was there ever a hint that these separated Eastern Churches disagreed with the Latin West on the number of the sacraments. The significance of this will be evident when we recall that in the West we have, as we have seen, no positive statement touching the number before the twelfth century. The unanimity of East and West on this point must then take us back behind the Photian Schism of the ninth century. Moreover, since the days of Trent the schismatic Greeks have repeatedly asserted their belief in the sevenfold sacraments; they rejected the Augustan Confession in 1576, and again in 1579 and 1581, precisely because that Creed did not assert this sevenfold character of the sacraments. When Cyril Lucar, the Patriarch of Constantinople, repeatedly stated in 1613, 1629 and 1631, under Calvinistic influence, that there were really only two sacraments, he

[1] In the Congregation held on 29th January, 1547, *Diaria*, V. 866.
[2] In the General Congregation of 21st February, 1567, *ib.* 968.

was condemned by the Greek Church at Constantinople in 1638 and 1642, and again at Jerusalem in 1672. The consent of East and West on this point, then, is an historical fact which can only be explained as due to immemorial tradition long ante-dating the schism between Rome and Constantinople.

## II

# THE NATURE AND THE RECEPTION OF THE SACRAMENTS

By The Rev. George D. Smith, D.D., Ph.D.

### I: THE NATURE OF THE SACRAMENTS

The Catechism of the Council of Trent, in a general introduction to the question of the sacraments, notes that the word *sacramentum* has many meanings in both profane and sacred literature, and that these meanings should be carefully distinguished. Without entering into a lengthy discussion of the etymology of the word, it is sufficient for our present purpose to remark that the Latin word *sacramentum*—with its Greek equivalent *μυστήριον*—came quite early in ecclesiastical usage to mean anything external which possessed an inner and sacred significance. Thus St. Augustine (*Serm.* 228, 3) speaks of the Lord's prayer and the Creed as sacraments, while Hugh of St. Victor (*De sacramentis Christianae fidei*) seems to include the whole of theology under that denomination. It was not until comparatively late in the history of theology—about the end of the twelfth century—that the word *sacrament* became reserved exclusively to the rites instituted by Christ for our sanctification.

If, then, for the moment we take the word in a very broad sense as meaning the sign of a sacred thing, the

external manifestation of an inner sacred reality, it becomes clear that the whole of God's relations with mankind are essentially sacramental. "The invisible things of him," says St. Paul (*Rom.* i, 20), "are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made; his eternal power also, and divinity." Likewise the Psalmist (xviii, 1): "The heavens show forth the glory of God"; and the author of the book of *Wisdom* (xiii, 10): "All men are vain . . . who by these good things that are seen could not understand him that is, neither by attending to the works have acknowledged who is the workman." All created perfections are an external manifestation of God's beauty and holiness; the whole of the visible universe is in man's sight the sign of something ineffably and infinitely holy, of the perfection of the Creator, of the hidden life of God.

But the things of sense, considered merely as signs of God's infinite holiness, have not yet the fullness of sacramental meaning. They become truly sacramental only when, in addition to teaching us that God is holy, they convey to us, produce in us, a participation of that holiness, when they are no longer merely signs of the inner life of God, but become the channels whereby that divine life is imparted to us. (*cf. Sum. Theol.* iii, q.60, a.2, *ad* 1.)

For God has willed that man should be more than man. He has vouchsafed to give him a participation in His own nature, raising him to the supernatural order by sanctifying grace. This most noble gift, given gratuitously to humanity in our first parents and by them cast away, is restored to us through the Incarnation of the Son of God. In Christ, truly God and truly man, "the fullness of the divinity dwelt corporally" because with his human nature the divinity was

hypostatically united. But His human nature was the temple of God also because his soul was filled with sanctifying grace. Christ is the source of all grace, and of "His fullness we have all received."

Christ, the Son of God incarnate, was therefore not only a manifestation of God upon earth, not merely a sign of God's holiness; He was God Himself. Not only by His human life did He teach mankind the truth concerning God, but through His humanity He communicated the sanctity of God to men, He gave to men that participation in the divine nature which is grace. He is the way and the truth: but He is also the life. "As the living Father sent Me, and I live by the Father, so he that eateth Me, the same also shall live by Me" (*Jn.* vi, 58). In other words, the Word Incarnate is the sign of God's life and the cause of the participation of that life in our souls. Rightly then did Paschasius Radbertus call Christ *magnum quoddam sacramentum:* "truly a great sacrament" (*De corp et sang. Domini*, cap 3).

It is significant that the consideration of Christ as the source from whom we derive the divine life has brought us—almost unawares—to mention the sacrament of the Eucharist: "He that eateth Me, the same also shall live by Me." The Church is the mystical body of Christ, the perpetuation on earth of the Word Incarnate. This being so, we should have expected that the sacramental economy, initiated in creation itself, continued throughout the Old Testament by the rites that foreshadowed what was to come, and brought to perfection in the Incarnation, would be continued in the Church that he founded. And so indeed it has been. The life-giving humanity of Christ is truly, really and substantially present in the august Sacrament of the Eucharist, and there continues the

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sanctifying work of the Incarnation. The source of all grace is the humanity of Christ; it is obvious, therefore, that the sacrament of His body and blood holds the primary place among the sacraments as the source from which all other sacraments derive their efficacy.[1] Grouped round this centre of the sacramental system are six other sacraments, with divine wisdom adapted to the various needs of man's spiritual life. By Baptism we are buried with Christ to rise by a spiritual regeneration to newness of life; by Confirmation we are given an increase of the Holy Spirit to strengthen the young life against attack and to prepare us for the Eucharist, the food of the strong. Human frailty has been provided against by the sacraments of Penance and Extreme Unction; Holy Orders consecrates an unending succession of ministers in the Church of God; and Marriage is sanctified by sacramental grace as the divinely appointed means whereby the members of Christ's body may be increased and multiplied.

It has often been pointed out, and rightly, that the theology of the sacraments was comparatively tardy in its development. The sacraments were used long before Christians began to theorise about them, and before St. Augustine laid the broad foundations of sacramental theology, Catholic doctrine concerning the Trinity and the Incarnation had almost reached its complete theological formulation. However, it is one thing to say that St. Augustine first gave us the

[1] *Fons omnium gratiarum dicenda est, cum fontem ipsum caelestium charismatum et donorum omniumque sacramentorum auctorem Christum Dominum admirabili modo in se contineat: a quo tamquam a fonte ad alia sacramenta quidquid boni et perfectionis habent, derivatur.* (*Catech. Concil. Trid. De Euch.* xlviii. *Cf. Sum. Theol.* iii, q.73, a.3; q.79, a.1.)

elements of a theological synthesis; it is another—a favourite contention among liberal thinkers—to say that he invented the Catholic doctrine of the sacraments. Long before the time of St. Augustine it had been understood that the sacraments were efficacious signs instituted for our sanctification. St. Paul had already developed the deep signification of Baptism, the Eucharist and Matrimony; and the efficacy of the sacraments is at least indicated in the New Testament (*Cf. Rom.* vi, 4; *I Cor.* x, 17; *Eph.* v, 31 *seq.*; *Jn.* iii, 5). The Fathers of the first three centuries do little more than repeat the symbolism of St. Paul, especially with regard to Baptism and the Eucharist, the latter sacrament in particular being appealed to as the symbol and the source of ecclesiastical unity against those who had seceded by heresy from the one body of Christ. As far as the causality of the sacraments is concerned they content themselves for the most part with emphasising the inevitability of their effect, thus leaving it open to discussion in the Scholastic period (*Cf. Sum. Theol.* iii, q.62, a.1) whether the sacraments are real causes of grace, or simply the indispensable conditions of its infusion.

It is St. Augustine, as we have already mentioned, who first gives us anything resembling a theological synthesis. It is to him that we owe the concise definition afterwards developed by the Scholastics and in particular by St. Thomas (*Sum. Theol.* iii, q.60, a.1): "*sacramentum, id est, sacrum signum*" (*De Civ Dei*, x, 5). Elsewhere he gives us the classical definition of a sign: "*Id quod praeter speciem sui aliquid aliud ex se facit in cogitationem venire*" (*De Doctrina Christiana*, ii, 1-4), and elaborates the distinction between natural and conventional signs. The sacraments partake of the nature of

both. The sacraments are not arbitrary signs; they must bear some resemblance to the things which they signify. "*Si enim sacramenta aliquam similitudinem earum rerum quarum sacramenta sunt non haberent, omnino sacramenta non essent*" (*Ep.* 98 *ad Bonif.* n.9). The sacrament signifies externally what it effects in the soul: "*aqua sacramenti visibilis est. . . . abluit corpus et significat quod fit in anima*" (*In ep. Joann. ad Parth.* 6, 11). And what is this effect? He answers concisely: "*gratia . . . sacramentorum virtus est*" (*Enarr. in ps.* 77, 2). Without saying in so many words that the sacraments are true causes, he attributes to them a divine virtue or power: "*unde tanta virtus aquae corpus ut tangat et cor abluat. . .*?" (*In Joan. tr.* lxxx, 3). Nor is their effect due to the dispositions or the merits of the recipient or the minister. The sacraments possess an objective virtue such that even a child, unable to make an rational act or to prepare himself for grace, may and does receive their effect (*ibid.*).

Hence we have first of all the clear-cut distinction between the external sign, called by the Scholastics *sacramentum tantum*, the sacrament properly so called, and the interior effect of the sacrament, *res sacramenti*. The causal connection between these two is studied in another paper. Here we have to consider the sacrament simply as a sign, abstracting for the present from its efficacy. Nevertheless in studying the sacrament as a sign only, we shall be studying the whole sacrament, not merely a part of it, for when we have found what is essential for the complete sign we shall know what is essential for the complete cause. The sign is the cause.

As signs we may use things, actions or words. Things and actions are of their nature ambiguous. It need

hardly be stressed that actions are open to many and various interpretations, while things, used as signs, are even more equivocal. The raising of the hand may signify the intention of striking a blow, or it may be a gesture of benediction. Water may signify washing, but it may also signify drinking. The act of washing may signify the cleansing of the body, but in certain circumstances it may be symbolical of cleansing from guilt. It is obvious that as signs words are far superior, since it is their very nature to signify. Now it is charateristic of the sacraments of the New Law that, generally speaking, they combine all these elements to form one complete and unequivocal sign. The sacraments consist of two elements: things or actions, and words. Already in the New Testament this twofold element is distinguished, both in the account given of the institution of certain sacraments, and in the *Epistle to the Ephesians*, where Baptism is called "the laver of water in the word of life" (v, 26).

Before dealing with the teaching of the Fathers on this aspect of the sacraments a few preliminary remarks may not be out of place. First let me recall what was said earlier, that the sacraments were used before their theology was discussed. Hence we need feel no surprise when we find that the earlier Fathers deal less with the dogmatic theology of the sacraments than with their pastoral or practical aspect. It was less important that the faithful should know the theology of the sacraments than that they should treat them with reverence. Hence we find at this period great insistence upon the necessity of proper dispositions in those who approach them, especially the greatest of them all, the Eucharist. For a similar reason attention is concentrated upon the three

sacraments of initiation: Baptism, Confirmation and the Eucharist. This is why any sacramental theory that we find incidentally developed among the early Fathers is applied chiefly to these familiar sacraments. In the second place it is to be noted that the sacraments differ considerably one from another, and that it was therefore not easy to find a theory which would apply equally to such different rites as, for example, Baptism and Penance, Confirmation and Matrimony. Before any such synthesis could be attempted the concepts of *sign* and *cause* had to be subjected to a subtle and systematic analysis.

And yet, as a matter of fact, even as early as the beginning of the third century we find Tertullian, and in the middle of the same century St. Cyprian, clearly distinguishing the twofold element in the sacramental sign. (Tertullian, *De Bapt.* 4; Cyprian, *Ep.* 70, 1-2.) They exemplify it, indeed, only by reference to the three sacraments above mentioned, but already the beginning of a synthesis had been made. The theory of the thing (or *elementum*) and the words was not new when St. Augustine clearly enunciated it.

"Take away the word," writes the Bishop of Hippo (*In Joannem tr.* lxxx, 3), "and what is water but water? Add the word to the water and the sacrament is completed, the sacrament, which is itself like a visible word." "Take away the water, and you have no Baptism; take away the word, and you have no Baptism" (*In Joan. tr.* xv, 4). But, clear though such statements are, they hardly exhaust the analysis of the sacramental sign. St. Augustine, like his predecessors, restricts his consideration to the sacraments of initiation, and the precise relation of each element of the

sign to the other still remains undetermined. It is by no means certain that St. Augustine differentiates sufficiently between the Eucharist and the other sacraments in this respect. He seems to have regarded the words as consecrating the element and imparting to it a sanctifying power. This, of course, is what actually happens in the case of the Eucharist, in which the bread and the wine, consecrated by the words, become the body and blood of Christ, the source of all sanctification. But to apply this theory to other sacraments which, unlike the Eucharist, have no permanence, but exist only in the moment of administration, leads to all sorts of difficulties, especially in the case of those sacraments—such as Penance and Matrimony—in which the "thing" to be consecrated is not easy to assign.

It is not until the thirteenth century that a theory appears that provides a framework into which all the sacraments may be fitted. It was almost inevitable, given the favour in which Aristotelianism was held by the Schoolmen, that the theory of matter and form should be utilised in the theology of the sacraments. Without going into the question in detail it is sufficient to note that according to the hylomorphic theory corporeal substance is ultimately composed of two elements, first matter and substantial form. The first, matter, is entirely indeterminate, potential, capable of determination, modification, or specification; it is the principle of passivity. The second, substantial form, by its union with first matter determines and specifies it, together with it constituting the complete corporeal substance of a particular class or species.

Now it is essential, in order to appreciate the meaning

of *matter* and *form* in connection with the sacraments, to remember that it is merely an analogy. The Schoolmen did not argue that a sacrament, being a corporeal thing, must therefore be composed of matter and form. But they were not slow to see the close analogy existing between the composition of corporeal substance and the composition of the sacramental sign. As matter was to form so was the "thing" (or the action) to the words in the sacrament. The thing or the action, as we have already remarked, is equivocal in its signification and requires to be determined and specified, restricted in its meaning, by words. This is precisely what happens in the sacraments; the determinable element, the thing, is determined and specified by the words used. Matter, the potential element, and form, the specifying element, unite to form one complete substance. In the sacrament the thing and the words unite to form one complete, perfect sacramental sign. What more natural than that, by analogy, the thing should be called the matter and the words the form of the sacrament?

Analogies have their value; but they have also their danger. The value of analogies is that they clarify concepts; their danger is that they may be pushed too far. The danger of this particular analogy is that the sacrament may be conceived as a mechanical whole, composed of a mere thing and mere words. St. Thomas warns us against this danger and avoids it himself when, in answer to the objection that no change whatever may be made in the words of the sacramental form, since anything added to or subtracted from the form changes the species, he points out that the words constitute the form of the sacrament by reason of their signification, and if a change

is made which leaves that signification unaltered the sacrament is unaffected (*Sum. Theol.* iii, q.60, a.8, *ad* 2).

The advantages of the new terminology are sufficiently obvious. In the first place it enabled theologians to set out in clearer relief the unity of the sacramental sign: the two elements in the sacrament are fused in one complete and perfect sign, as the two elements of corporeal substance form one complete substance. And just as matter does not exist without form, nor form without matter, so neither of the two sacramental elements without the other can constitute the sacrament. In the words of St. Augustine, "*tolle aquam, non est baptismus, tolle verbum, non est baptismus.*" Moreover, moral theologians have been enabled by this means to specify clearly what is necessary for the validity of the sacraments. The sacraments are not arbitrary signs which the minister—or even the Church—may change at will; they are signs instituted by Christ and endowed by him with their peculiar efficacy. Hence any change in their essential elements invalidates them, for they are then no longer the signs instituted by Christ. A third advantage of the terminology of matter and form is that it gave theologians a framework into which the sacraments of Penance and Matrimony—always, even to-day, a difficulty—could more easily be fitted. It is difficult in the rite of Matrimony, for example, to find the "thing"; but it is not difficult to find in it an element which is potential and determinable, side by side with another which determines and specifies its significance. The term "matter" is more elastic than "thing"; an indication of which may be seen in the Decree for the Armenians, where Pope Eugenius IV uses the term *quasi-matter* for the acts of the penitent in the sacrament of Penance.

The analogy thus adopted in the Council of Florence was finally and officially consecrated by its use in the decrees of the council of Trent.

In connection with the matter and form of the sacrament one other question remains to be dealt with. The Council of Trent, having in its 21st Session treated the matter of communion under one kind alone, goes on to declare that "the Church had always possessed the power to decide upon any change in the dispensation of the sacraments which she might judge to be expedient in the interests of the faithful and for the veneration due to the sacraments, always saving their substance (*salva illorum substantia*)." The Church equivalently declares that she has no power over the "substance" of the sacraments. What is this substance of the sacraments, over which the Church disclaims authority? Evidently the sacraments, inasmuch as they are of divine institution, cannot be changed by ecclesiastical authority; for the Church is but the dispenser of the mysteries of God. "Let a man account us as the ministers of Christ and the dispensers of the mysteries of God" (*I Cor.* iv, 1).

The substance of the sacraments, therefore, is constituted by those elements in the sacraments which have been instituted by Christ. May we then say that the substance is identical with the matter and form? The answer to this question really depends upon the answer given to another, which lies, however, beyond the scope of this paper—the question how the sacraments were instituted. Theologians debate whether Christ instituted the matter and form of each sacrament *in genere* or *in specie*. The matter and form of some of the sacraments (e.g., Baptism and the Eucharist) were certainly instituted specifically by Christ. But did He

not, perhaps, in the case of other sacraments—Confirmation, for example—institute their matter and form in a more general way? It is suggested by many theologians that in some cases He left the actual determination of the matter and form of the sacraments to His Apostles, or to the Church, contenting Himself with a general indication that a suitable sign—to be specified by them—should be chosen which by His will should produce grace for a certain purpose. They find this view acceptable, since it enables them more easily to explain how the matter and form of certain sacraments (Holy Orders, for example) has varied at different periods in the Western Church, and to explain the divergencies still to-day existing between East and West in the administration of some of the sacraments. Whatever be the solution of this question, it is certain that the "substance" of the sacraments, which the Church cannot change, is the matter and form of the sacraments so far as they were specified by Christ who instituted them.

## II: THE ADMINISTRATION AND RECEPTION OF THE SACRAMENTS

It has been seen that a sacrament consists essentially of two elements, the matter and the form. When these are joined together, forming the perfect sign, the sacrament is completed. I say "completed," not "administered," because, although generally speaking it is true to say that a sacrament begins and ends with its administration to a recipient, there is one important exception: the Eucharist. The Eucharist differs from

the other sacraments in that it is permanent; it exists independently of its administration. As soon as the words of the form have been pronounced over the matter (bread and wine), the sacrament, the body and blood of Christ under the appearances of bread and wine, exists in its perfection, even though it may never be administered. So long, however, as we bear in mind this important exception, we may say generally that the sacrament is completed when matter and form are united and applied to the recipient, *i.e.*, when the sacrament is administered. The person who does this is called the minister of the sacrament. We have now to inquire what conditions are necessary in the minister and in the recipient of the sacrament.

(i) *The Minister.*[1] In the discussion of this question we must distinguish carefully between lawful and valid administration. A sacrament is a sacred thing; it is obvious, therefore, that to administer a sacrament when one is in the state of sin would be unlawful, in fact a sacrilege. But this would not of itself nullify the sacrament. If the essential elements of the sacrament have been duly performed, it is valid and capable —if the recipient has done what is required of him—of producing its proper effect. The reason of this is that the sacraments produce their effect *ex opere operato*, by an instrumental power intrinsic to them, and not in virtue of the merits of the minister, or indeed of the recipient. It is not the power of the minister that passes into the soul of him that receives the sacrament, but the life-giving power of Christ: *Virtus ab eo exibat et*

[1] In the case of five sacraments the power of orders is required in the minister. I confine myself to the consideration of the conditions required in *all* the sacraments.

*sanabat omnes*. The minister is nothing more than the living instrument executing the rite. It is Christ who sanctifies through the sacraments. Thus when the Corinthians were divided into parties, some calling themselves disciples of Paul, others of Peter, and others of Apollo, St. Paul warned them that the ministers of Christ were but men, and God's coadjutors. "Was Paul crucified for you?" he asks them, "or were you baptised in the name of Paul?" (*I Cor.* i, 12-13). The minister does nothing more than give existence to the sacrament, which produces its effect by a power inherent in it through the institution of Christ.

Not only is virtue not necessary in the minister of the sacrament, but even faith is not required for valid administration. This doctrine emerges from the famous question concerning re-baptism in the beginning of the third century, and from the controversy with the Donatists at the time of St. Augustine. It was towards the end of the second century that the question first arose as to the validity of baptism administered by heretics, the occasion of the discussion being the heresy of Marcion, who administered baptism with the proper rite. Tertullian, writing between the years 200 and 206 (*De Bapt.* 15), denied the validity of their baptism on the ground that to admit it would be to divide Christ: "*Non idem Deus nobis et illis nec unus Christus, ideoque nec baptismus unus.*" Yet in this Tertullian was opposing the general practice of the Church of not repeating the baptism conferred by heretics, a custom which virtually asserted the validity of the baptism already received. Some fifty years later the same question was formally put to St. Cyprian, bishop of Carthage, who, having called a synod to discuss the matter, decided that "none can be baptised

outside the Church, since there is one baptism only in the Church" (Cypr. *Ep.* 70 n.1; *cf. Ep.* 73, 18).

The discussion that ensued between St. Cyprian and Pope Stephen is too well-known to need elaboration. Its importance from our point of view lies in the two arguments used by Stephen to prove the validity of heretical baptism. "It matters not," he says, "who has baptised, because the baptised person has received grace from the invocation of the names of the Trinity, the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost" (Cypr. *Ep.* 75 *ad Firmil.*). In other words, the effect of the sacrament does not depend upon the faith of the minister, but upon the rite itself, duly performed. His second argument consists in an appeal to tradition: "*Nihil innovetur nisi quod traditum est*" (*ibid.*). Even St. Cyprian does not deny that it has always been the custom not to repeat baptism when once it has been administered by heretics, but he points out that it is not a question of what has been the custom, but rather of what is the more reasonable practice: "*Non est de consuetudine praescribendum sed ratione vincendum*" (*Ep.* 71, 2, 3). But, in any case, the African bishop does not seem to have regarded the question as one of faith, upon which uniformity was at all *de rigueur*. He considers it a matter of choice, suggesting that each party should be left to continue in its own practice (*Ep.* 72). The same question was raised again in Africa in the Donatist controversy at the end of the following century, when St. Augustine stood out as the protagonist in favour of the Roman and apostolic tradition. "*Quos baptizavit Judas*," he says, "*Christus baptizavit; sic ergo quos baptizavit ebriosus, quos baptizavit homicida, quos baptizavit adulter, si baptismus Christi erat, Christus baptizavit. Non timeo adulterum, non ebriosum, non homicidam, quia columbam attendo per quam*

*mihi dicitur: Hic est qui baptizat*" (*In Joan. tr.* v, 28). Briefly, as long as the baptism of Christ is administered, that is, the rite as instituted by Christ, it matters not how immoral the life, how vile the heresy of the minister may be; the sacrament is validly administered.

But if neither virtue nor faith are required in the minister for the valid administration of the sacraments, one important thing is necessary: the intention. It is a truth of faith that the minister who confers a sacrament must have the intention of "doing what the Church does." This was defined by the Council of Trent (*Sess.* vii, *can.* 11) against the error of the Reformers. According to these the sacraments were mere signs, serving only to arouse faith in the recipient. Nothing therefore was required, according to them, other than the outward performance of the rite, even though this might be done in jest or pretence. "I have no doubt," writes Luther (*De Capt. Babylonica*, cap. *De bapt.*) "that if a person receives a sacrament in the name of the Lord, even though a wicked minister does not confer it in the name of the Lord, nevertheless he is truly baptised in the name of the Lord." The Church had already had occasion to condemn this error in the Waldensians and in Wycliff (Denzinger, 424, 672).

As a matter of fact, the necessity of intention in the minister of doing what the Church does arises from the very nature of the sacraments. For the sacraments are not magical rites. There is nothing in water that is capable of cleansing the soul, nor have the mere words, "I baptise thee," *etc.*, of themselves any relation whatever to sanctifying grace. These belong to the sacrament only so far as they signify; they are the cause of sanctification only so far as they constitute together

with the act of washing the sign instituted by Christ. But words and action can constitute one sign only when related to each other by the intention of the minister. The mere simultaneity of the pouring of the water with the pronouncing of the words is not enough to relate to each other an action and words which, apart from human intention, are unconnected. Moreover it is Christ who sanctifies by means of the sacraments. Christ, who is no longer visibly present on earth, continues His work of sanctification through the sacraments in His mystical Body which is the Church. His ministers, therefore, must identify themselves with Christ by willing to carry out the intention of Christ, that is, by "intending to do what the Church does" by these sacred rites. Hence if a person made a sacrilegious pretence of baptising, or if a priest, intending merely to exercise himself in the proper celebration of the rite, pronounced the words of consecration over bread and wine, there would be no sacrament, by reason of the lack of intention in the minister.

It is important for the proper understanding of the doctrine of "intention" to distinguish carefully between faith, attention and intention. Faith, we have already seen, is not necessary in the minister for the validity of the sacrament. Even though the minister may not believe that the sacrament has any internal effect, even though he may be in error as to what that effect is, so long as he administers the rite duly, and with the intention of doing what the Church of Christ does when she uses that rite, the sacrament is valid. The matter cannot be illustrated more clearly than in the example given by Pope Innocent IV (Decret. l.3. tit.42 c.1. cap. *Si quis puerum*): "Suppose that someone were to go to a Saracen and say, 'baptise me,' and were

to teach him how to do it. If the Saracen baptised him in the belief that by immersing him in the water he was doing nothing more than making him wet, as long as he intended to baptise him, or even to wet him, according to the intention of the person who had made the request, with the will that the said baptism should produce all the effects that Baptism could produce, and intending as minister to confer what other ministers of Baptism confer, even though he himself believed that Baptism could produce no effect—yet the baptism would be valid. But if he did not intend this, the baptism would be null and void."

It should be noted, however, that all this presupposes the rite *duly* administered. If the heterodoxy of the minister led him to make such a change in the rite that it would no longer be the rite accepted in the Church, then the sacrament would be invalid.[1] This principle has important application in connection with the sacrament of Holy Orders. Nor must intention be confused with attention. The former is an act of will, the latter an act of the intellect. Intention means the decision, the will to do something; attention means advertence of the mind to what is being done. Obviously it is possible to intend to do a thing without attending to what one is doing. If intention is accompanied by attention, the intention is said to be *actual*. Thus if I set out to walk to church and, as I walk, reflect that I am walking with that object in view, then I am said to have the actual intention of walking to church. If, on the other hand, I decide to walk to church and,

[1] *Si [minister] intendat per huiusmodi additionem vel diminutionem alium ritum inducere qui non sit ab Ecclesia receptus, non videtur perfici sacramentum; quia non videtur quod intendat facere id quod facit Ecclesia.*" St. Thomas, *Sum. Theol.* iii, q.60, a.8, *in corp.*

proceeding on my way as the result of that decision, begin to think of other things, so that I pay no attention to what I am doing, my intention of walking to church is *virtual* only. I say that it is only a virtual intention, but I really have the intention of walking to church; a proof of which may be found in the fact that, if someone were to meet me and ask me where I was going, I should answer, my attention now being called to my intention, that I was going to church.

Now it is sufficient that the minister should have a virtual intention of doing what the Church does. Clearly, to demand an actual intention in every case would be excessive, human nature being what it is, and the occasions of distraction so numerous. A virtual intention is sufficient because all that is necessary is that the minister should by an act of will identify himself with the intention of the Church in administering the sacrament, and, as a result of that decision, duly administer the rite.

But if a virtual intention is sufficient, such intention at least is necessary. It is not sufficient for the minister to perform the rite with what theologians call *habitual* intention. Habitual intention is said to be present whenever there has been a decision which has not been revoked, even though it may have no causative influence upon the performance of the action. Thus if a priest, having decided to baptise a person, and not having revoked his intention, were afterwards to perform the rite in a state of somnambulism, he would baptise with habitual intention, and invalidly. Such intention is insufficient, because the act so intended is not a reasonable or *human* act.

A controversy arose in the sixteenth century as to whether this intention must be *internal*. The controversy

is replete with misunderstandings, and the very terms in which the question is put are equivocal. Clearly, intention of its very nature is internal. But Catharinus, in suggesting that an external intention suffices in the minister of the sacrament, meant that it is sufficient that the minister should intend to perform the external rite, that is, without intending to perform it as sacramental, or as producing an internal effect. Thus, according to this theory, a priest who intentionally pours water on the head of a person and intentionally pronounces the words, "I baptise thee," *etc.*, would baptise validly, even though he definitely excluded from his intention the will to confer a sacrament instituted by Christ or to produce an internal effect in the soul.[1] This view is now generally rejected by theologians. No Catholic, of course, contends that it is necessary for the validity of the sacrament that the minister should *believe* either that the rite he administers was instituted by Christ or that it has any interior efficacy. But, even though he may not *believe* in such a rite, if it is to be valid, he must *intend* to administer such a rite. The precise reason why this intention is necessary —as we have seen—is in order that actions and words which of their nature are unconnected should be related to each other in such a way as to constitute one sacred sign instituted by Christ; and unless the intention so to connect them is present, the sacred sign does not exist (*cf.* St. Thomas, *in 4 dist.* 6, q. 1, a. 1). Hence the intention of the minister must be not merely to do certain actions and say certain words, but to connect such actions and such words so as to constitute

[1] This opinion of Catharinus is to be distinguished from that of Luther mentioned above. Catharinus requires that the external rite be *seriously* administered.

a sacrament, or a sacred rite, in other words, his intention must be internal.[1]

(ii) There remain to be considered the conditions necessary in the *recipient* of the sacraments. Here again it is important to distinguish between licit and valid reception. For valid reception it is sufficient to be a capable *subject* for the sacrament, and to have the necessary intention of receiving it. For licit reception it is necessary in addition to receive the sacrament with those dispositions which enable it to produce its proper effect. These statements need some explanation.

Every unbaptised human being in this life is a fit subject for baptism; only a baptised person is capable of validly receiving the other sacraments. But not every baptised person is able to receive all the other sacraments validly, as will be made clear in the papers of this School which deal with the individual sacraments.

In accordance with the theological principle that no man is justified unless he so wills, no adult receives a sacrament validly unless he has the intention of receiving it. Generally speaking, a habitual intention suffices for the valid reception of the sacraments. The sacrament is a gift, which God does not thrust upon our unwilling acceptance. It is sufficient, therefore, that a person should once have expressed his willingness to receive it, and, as long as he has not retracted that intention once expressed, he is *habitually* willing to receive the sacrament, and receives it validly, even

[1] This intention need not be *explicit*. It may be contained implicitly in the general intention of doing what others do when they administer the rite. Thus the contracting parties to a marriage are the ministers of the sacrament, even though they may not know it. The intention sufficient for the validity of the sacrament is contained implicitly in their intention to contract marriage as Christians contract it, i.e., as a sacrament.

though he may be unconscious or otherwise deprived of the control of his actions.

But a habitual intention at least is necessary. Hence a sacrament administered to a sleeping or unconscious person who had always consistently refused to receive it, or had never given any reason to suppose that he wanted to receive it, would be invalid. In such case there is no evidence of intention at all. It should be noted, however, that this habitual intention may be implicit. A Catholic who from his general manner of life might be presumed to wish to receive Viaticum and Extreme Unction on his death-bed, would receive these sacraments validly in an unconscious state, even though he might never actually have expressed the desire to receive them. So also, according to many theologians, an unbaptised person who during his life has given every reason to suppose that he wished to do all that was necessary for his salvation might in similar circumstances validly receive the sacrament of Baptism. Obviously, however, any expression of a contrary intention must be taken as excluding this implicit habitual intention, and, in cases in which there has been a definite refusal to receive the sacraments, it would be vain to administer them.[1]

I have said that generally speaking a habitual intention is sufficient for the valid reception of the sacraments. But two important exceptions must be

[1] *Cf.* Denzinger n.411. The implicit habitual intention is called by some theologians an *interpretative* intention. Care must be taken, however, not to interpret too freely. Thus a priest, faced by the refusal of a dying man to receive baptism, would wrongly interpret such refusal by arguing that if the man really knew what he needed he would no longer refuse. An interpretative intention is not an intention which is interpreted to be present when it is really absent; it is a habitual intention which is interpreted to be *implicitly* contained in an intention which is known to exist.

made, in favour of the two sacraments of Penance and Matrimony. For the valid reception of these at least a virtual intention is required. The reason is that the recipients of the sacrament of Matrimony are also its ministers; they need therefore to have the intention which is necessary in the minister of a sacrament. The acts of the penitent, contrition, confession and satisfaction (at least accepted) are, according to many theologians, the matter of the sacrament, according to others, certainly an indispensable condition of its validity, and must therefore be "human acts," and hence at least virtually intended.

But a sacrament, however valid, may be unlawfully received. Leaving to other lecturers the task of dealing with each sacrament individually, I confine myself here to a statement of the general principles governing the dispositions with which the sacraments should be received.

It has already been remarked that the sacraments, in spite of the gibes of certain unbelievers, are not magical rites. A further indication of this may be seen in the fact that the sacraments, although they produce their effect *ex opere operato*, by a virtue intrinsic to themselves, will nevertheless not operate unless the subject to whom they are administered is in the proper dispositions. The sacrament may be perfectly valid and therefore quite capable of producing its effect, yet that effect may be prevented by an obstacle in the soul of the recipient. Wilfully to place such an obstacle in the way of the sacramental efficacy is a mortal sin, a sacrilege.

Since faith, in the words of the Council of Trent, is the "foundation and root of the whole of justification," it is clear that none can receive a sacrament fruitfully

unless he has faith; "without faith it is impossible to please God." But in addition to faith a further disposition is necessary, the absence of which constitutes what theologians call an *obex* to the grace of the sacrament. Not only must the intellect of the recipient be subject to God by faith, but his will must be detached from the inordinate love of creatures, before grace can be infused into his soul. And here it is necessary to recall the well-known distinction between the sacraments of the living and the sacraments of the dead. The former are those sacraments (Confirmation, Eucharist, Extreme Unction, Holy Orders and Matrimony) which presuppose the life of grace already existing in the soul and increase it, while the sacraments of the dead (Baptism and Penance) have as their proper effect to give grace to those who are deprived of it. Since grace cannot dwell in the soul of one who is attached to sin, who in other words is impenitent, it is clear that a necessary condition in an adult for the fruitful reception of a sacrament of the dead is a true sorrow for sin. In the case, therefore, of adult Baptism and Penance an *obex* would be the lack of a true sorrow for sin. It should not, however, be hastily assumed that in the case of the sacraments of the living an *obex* is constituted by mortal sin as such. It is not mortal sin, but *conscious* mortal sin that obstructs the effect of the sacraments of the living. For it is only when the recipient is conscious of his sin that he wilfully opposes himself to the purpose for which the sacrament was instituted.

The fact that the effect of a valid sacrament may be frustrated by an *obex* in the recipient raises the question as to whether grace is infused into the soul when that *obex* is removed. The question is answered

by the common doctrine of the *reviviscence* or revival of the sacraments. The phrase is in general use among theologians and therefore is in no danger of being misunderstood. But strictly speaking it is a misnomer. It is not true to say that the sacraments, which (with the exception mentioned above) cease to exist immediately after their administration, come to life again. Nor is it true that grace, the effect of the sacraments, revives, since in the hypothesis we are considering it has never been alive. The word *reviviscence* seems to have been applied here by a false analogy with the restoration of previous merits after sin has been forgiven.

But the question of words apart, the teaching of theologians, up to a certain point, is fairly clear. All are agreed that the grace of the characteristic sacraments, which can never be repeated, is given when the *obex* is removed. The reason is twofold: first, that in the case of these sacraments, if validly received, a physical reality (the character) is produced in the soul which will cause the ultimate effect of the sacrament (grace), when the obstacle is removed; and secondly, that it does not seem in keeping with God's mercy that one who has received these sacraments unworthily should be for ever deprived of the grace which is their proper effect.

With regard to the sacraments of Extreme Unction and Matrimony most theologians hold that their grace revives, at least during the period during which they cannot be repeated. The reasons assigned are the same —*mutatis mutandis*—as for the characteristic sacraments. Some, however, exclude Extreme Unction, since they are unable to find in this sacrament any permanent intermediate effect—such as the matrimonial bond in

the sacrament of Matrimony—which should be the cause of grace.[1]

As to the other two sacraments, Penance and the Eucharist, the common opinion of theologians is that their grace is not given when the *obex* is removed. Neither of the two above reasons apply in the case of these sacraments, and for Penance there is the additional difficulty that, according to the majority of theologians, any lack of proper dispositions in its reception invalidates the sacrament. It need hardly be added that a person receiving the Eucharist when conscious of being in mortal sin receives the grace of the sacrament if he removes the *obex* during the period of the real presence under the sacramental species. This, however, is not a case of reviviscence or revival, but the normal operation of the sacrament.

This superficial outline of the subject would be also incomplete if I did not mention the well-known view of Fr. Billot, who, with a considerable theological following, holds that *all* the sacraments "revive," since every valid sacrament produces as its immediate effect an intentional entity, or title to grace, which, when the *obex* has been removed, calls infallibly for its infusion. The discussion of this view, however, bound up as it is with a particular theory on the causality of the sacraments, would carry me beyond the modest scope of this paper.

[1] P. Marin-Sola O.P. has given an ingenious and, as it appears, a truly Thomistic solution of this difficult question. See *Divus Thomas*, Jan. 1925, pp. 49-63.

## III

# THE EFFICACY OF THE SACRAMENTS

By the Rev. R. W. Meagher, D.D., Ph.D., M.A.

The sacraments are practical signs of divine grace, for they cause that which they signify. They are not demonstrative signs such as we meet with on the railways and roads of this country. A signal, for example may make known to the driver of a locomotive the presence of danger ahead, but it does not cause the danger; an inn-sign may indicate to the traveller that within the house food and drink are to be had, but it does not cook that food nor yet brew the ale. A practical sign means much more than such indications. When the waters of Baptism are poured on the baby's head, they not only show that the soul within is cleansed from sin by the symbolic washing of the body without, but also play an active part in the purification of the soul by bringing about in that soul certain effects of a supernatural order. These effects are known by the generic term *sacramental grace*. In the case of three sacraments a further effect is included, namely the impression of an indelible mark or character. Sacramental grace proper is divided up into (1) sanctifying grace, (2) the supernatural and operative habits of virtue and (3) those peculiar graces that vary according to the purpose of each sacrament. Tertullian has these special effects in mind when he writes: "The body is

washed to cleanse the soul from stain; the body is anointed to consecrate the soul; the body is signed to fortify the soul; the body is overshadowed by the imposition of hands to enlighten the soul by the Holy Ghost; the body is fed on the flesh and blood of Christ that the soul may wax fat of God" (*De Resurr. Carnis*, c. viii). These special graces do not really differ from sanctifying grace except so far as they add to it the right to certain actual graces.[1]

The existence of the sacramental character which is conferred by Baptism, Confirmation and Holy Orders, was denied by Wycliff and the pseudo-Reformers. It was, they asserted, the invention of medieval theologians, and in particular of Gregory IX (1227), or of Innocent III (1250). Harnack realised the stupidity of this view and went much further back in seeking the origins of Catholic teaching on this point. St. Augustine, according to him, was the real inventor, if not of the term, at least of the doctrine.[2] In the time of St. Thomas Aquinas all theologians were agreed on the fact that a character was impressed on the soul by certain sacraments, though they were not unanimous in explaining *how* that character was given.[3] The existence of the sacramental character cannot be apodeictically proved from Scripture, though there do occur references that are definitely in favour of the doctrine; our proofs, therefore, must come from the writings of the Fathers and from Tradition. That Baptism, Confirmation and Order do produce a character is defined by the Council of Trent (Sess. VII, can, 9); that the four remaining sacraments do not is implicitly defined by the same Council, which enumerates three sacraments,

[1] *Cf.* St. Thomas *Sum. Theol.* iii, q.62, a.2.
[2] *Dogmengeschichte*, III, 140 *sqq.*
[3] IV Dist. 4, q.1, a.1.

and only three, as possessing this effect. Eugenius IV in the Decree for the Armenians (November, 1439) states definitely that only three sacraments confer a character. The objections of Wycliff, Luther, etc., against the doctrine are unphilosophical and unhistorical, for they are based on a failure to distinguish between terminology and belief. No doubt the word *character* in its technical sense does not occur in Scripture, nor in the writings of the earliest Fathers. You can say the same of much of the Church's terminology which, as was only natural, took shape gradually under the stress of heresy and doctrinal disputes. It is childish to maintain that because a certain word does not appear till long after the foundation of the Church, it must necessarily follow that all belief in the connotation of that term is a new thing. If this were so, then the Catholic beliefs in the Trinity, Incarnation, Real Presence, *etc.*, only came into existence with words like *hypostasis*, *homoousion*, *consubstantial*, *transubstantiation*! It is this strange, or deliberate, inability to distinguish words and their meanings that has been responsible for much of what is called Modernism. We Catholics maintain that progress has indeed been made in the way in which revealed truths are expressed, that certain formulas, at first obscure, became clear and crystallized as the centuries passed by, but we refuse to admit any evolution in the dogmas themselves. Thus we hold that the doctrine of the sacramental character, though not at first clearly formulated, has always existed substantially in the deposit of Faith. The language of the fourth-century Fathers shows that before St. Augustine's time they knew and believed in what Trent later defined. St. Ephraem the Syrian may be cited as a witness for the beliefs of his church in

the fourth century. In his hymn *De Oleo et Oliva* he says: "The Holy Ghost by means of oil impresses his own sign on his sheep. Just as a ring impresses its seal on wax, so the hidden seal of the Spirit is impressed at Baptism" (Assemani, *Bib. Orient.* I, 94). St. Cyril of Jerusalem (315-386) explicitly refers to the seal (σφραγῖδα) impressed on the soul in Confirmation or at any rate in Baptism (*Catechesis* I, cap. 3). St. Basil calls Baptism σφραγῖδα ἀνεπιχείρητον (an unbreakable seal or mark) in his homily on that sacrament. I will now turn to the famous controversy between St. Augustine and the Donatists. Both sides held that Baptism, Confirmation and Order could only be received validly once. The Donatists, however, maintained that these sacraments when conferred by heretics were invalid, and therefore should be repeated. St. Augustine held that they were validly conferred and to repeat them was an impious practice. Sanctifying grace was not conferred by heretical sacraments on account of the subjective indispositions of the recipient, but another effect, which was indelible, was produced in the soul, namely a mark or seal which definitely forbade reiteration. He appealed vigorously to the practice of the Universal Church and to the traditions of the past in support of his position, an important fact. The word *character* in its technical sense is used by Augustine in his letter to Boniface, written about 417. "The sacrament of Baptism," he says, "is valid even among heretics, and is sufficient to consecrate them, though it does not suffice for any share in eternal life; this consecration makes a heretic guilty of wearing the Lord's mark (*characterem dominicum*) while not a member of the Lord's flock." The metaphor is, of course, from the mark branded on sheep to denote that they belong

to a definite individual. The "consecration" of which St. Augustine speaks, and which he distinguishes from the grace conferred by the sacrament, is in another work explicitly stated to be the reason why the sacrament conferring it may not be repeated, and is therefore nothing else than the sacramental character mentioned in the Penny Catechism.[1]

The "discipline of the secret" accounts for much of the guarded and incomplete information about the sacraments in the earlier Fathers, and it is not surprising that we find very little evidence of their belief in the character. It is, however, interesting to note that the form for Confirmation used in the Greek Church suggests quite definitely that from earliest times men held that the soul was "sealed" in the conferring of that sacrament, "The seal of the Gift of the Holy Ghost."

In its nature the character is something real that inheres intrinsically in the soul as a sort of quality, though theologians are not in agreement as to whether it is a mere habit or a genuine power of a supernatural order given to the soul in order that the latter may receive something or do something.[2] Certainly it is to be regarded as a special sign distinguishing a man from his fellows and denoting that he is in some way devoted to the service or the ministry of Christ, just as during the late war divisional infantry, artillery, etc., carried a distinctive mark to denote their division. To carry on this comparison still further one may say with St. Augustine[3] and St. Thomas that[4] the character will

[1] "*Utrumque* [*Baptismus sc. et Ordo*] *sacramentum est et quadam consecratione utrumque homini datur, illud cum baptizatur, istud cum ordinatur: ideoque in Catholica utrumque non licet iterari.*" *Cont. Epist. Parmeniani* (*A.D.* 400).

[2] *Cf.* St. Thomas, *Sum. Theol.* iii, q.63, a.2.

[3] *In Psalm* xxxix, n.1. "*Baptismus ille tanquam* character *infixus est; ornabat militem convincit desertorem.*"

[4] *Sum. Theol.* iii, q.63, a.5, *ad* 3.

remain in the soul for ever to increase the happiness of its possessor in heaven or to add to his confusion in hell, in precisely the same way as a soldier's regimental or divisional badge increased his sense of glory in victory or of disgrace in defeat.[1]

The Catholic teaching on the question of sacramental grace and the mode in which the sacraments confer this grace is explicitly defined by Trent in its Seventh Session, cann. 6 and 8, March 1547. The Council states that the sacraments of the New Law contain grace as well as signify it, and confer grace *ex opere operato* on those who do not hinder their efficacy. This teaching is very remote from the theories of the Reformers; it is still further removed from the "magic" of Dr. Barnes. As the Council uses the phrase *ex opere operato* and the word *obex* in its definition, some words of explanation in regard to these technicalities are necessary. The phrase *ex opere operato* can, I think, be traced no further back than Peter of Poitiers, a Chancellor of the University of Paris in the twelfth century (1170-1175). Peter was a famous theologian in his day and the phrase he apparently coined was adopted by Catholic theology. The Tridentine Fathers used it as being the most suitable for their purpose. In explaining its meaning I must call attention to the passive use of the participle *operatus*. Originally the word *operatus* was an adjective signifying "full of work, busy," for it was formed from the noun *opera* (*cf. ansatus* from *ansa*). As, however, it resembled in form participles such as *hortatus* and *palatus* a deponent verb *operari* was developed, which, like a number of other deponents, gradually came to have a passive meaning.[2] When em-

[1] *Cf.* Trent, Session 7, c.9.

[2] For similar passive uses of deponents compare the Vulgate text of *Heb.* xiii, 16; and *Mt.* i, 33.

ployed by medieval theologians this passive sense in the participle is therefore quite normal. Translated into English the phrase means "from the work done" or "effected, brought about." On the other hand the expression *ex opere operantis* signifies the active part played by the recipient of a sacrament exclusive of or including any effect that the sacrament may produce. The *obex* or obstacle of which the Council speaks, is that disposition in the soul of the recipient which is repugnant to the infusion of grace; any one, for instance, whose will is habitually inclined to, or actually clings to, grave sin, puts an obstacle in the way of the workings of grace. This *obex gratiae*, as it is called, must be distinguished from the *obex sacramenti*, which prevents a sacrament from existing at all; diriment impediments in matrimony, or the female sex in Holy Orders are good examples of the *obex sacramenti*. With these brief explanations I now turn to the Church's doctrine on the efficacy of the sacraments in general. When a person, says the Church, is duly disposed, and when the sacramental rite is valid and performed according to Christ's intention, grace and the other supernatural gifts are conferred on such a person by the objective application of the external sacramental sign. The internal acts either of the minister or of the recipient (*opus operantis*) do not merit the effects of the sacrament; such acts are the secondary causes of the sacrament, or a condition of the infusion of grace, or negative dispositions removing obstacles to grace, or lastly positive dispositions to that grace. To make this clearer take as an example a tilled patch of earth watered by runnels supplied from a river. If one of these runnels be dammed up effectively, the water will not reach that portion of the ground which the runnel

has to irrigate. Remove the dam and the water flows steadily onwards, and successfully performs its task *ex opere operato*. Similarly, if you remove the *obex gratiae* and posit a right intention and due power on the part of the minister, the sacramental grace will flow into the soul automatically, as soon as the matter and form of the sacrament have been conjoined. In my simile the *opus operantis*, or the work of the gardener who removes the dam, is a cause or necessary condition for the flow of the waters, but it does not accomplish their fertilizing task. So it is with the sacrament; the dispositions of the subject, however good they may be, do not do the work of the sacrament received. Bearing this rather crude example in mind you will at once see how Luther, Calvin and Kemnitz misinterpreted Catholic doctrine in the matter of sacramental efficacy *ex opere operato*. These men, who ought to have known better, claimed that the Church taught that grace was infused into the soul or augmented in it without any salutary motion on the part of the will of the recipient, and without the need of any faith or contrition for sin either.[1] No wonder Calvin thought our doctrine to be a *monstrum verborum*. Such confusion in elementary notions is probably responsible for the attitude of those who regard Catholic sacramental doctrine as magical or superstitious. There is, however, no magic about the doctrine; the Author of grace (and speaking a priori what is to prevent Him?) uses the sacrament as an instrument of grace, that is all.

Put as briefly as possible the teaching of the Reformers in this matter of the efficacy of the sacraments is as follows: the sacraments confer grace on the soul

[1] Luther, *Capt. Babyl.*, cap. *De Baptismo:* Calvin, *Antidotum Conc. Trid.* Session 7, cc. 5 and 6; Kemnitz, *Examen*, Pt. II.

*ex opere operantis*, that is by means of the recipient's faith which is roused up by the external (and empty) rite. Faith alone justifies a man, and in order to awaken that faith (it is really a sort of confidence in God's special promises to each individual), the sacraments were instituted by Christ as a kind of seal or certificate guaranteeing that these promises had actually been made. Baptism, for example, merely testifies to the fact that Christ has promised redemption to those who trust in his word; the rite is a pledge and reminder that man's sins will be covered, but it is the recipient's confidence in Christ that justifies. It is, however, impossible to explain fully the meaning of the Reformers, because there is little agreement among them, and even protagonists like Luther and Calvin are inconsistent. Sometimes they appear to regard the sacraments as veritable causes of grace, and as "magical" in their efficacy as any Catholic sacrament. Modernistic thought has logically developed the exaggerated subjectivism of the Reformers by maintaining that the purpose of the sacraments is simply that of reminding men of the ever-beneficent presence of the Creator, a purpose which, I presume, the sacraments share with the meanest work of God's hands!

We Catholics hold that our doctrine on sacramental efficacy is revealed in the Sacred Scriptures. It would take me too long to quote and examine all the texts that bear on the point, and beyond giving a few I will leave them all to a more complete examination at the hands of those who are to treat of the sacraments individually. Thus St. Paul exhorts Timothy to "stir up the grace of God which is in thee by the imposition of my hands" *II Tim.*, i, 6. The same apostle, in describing his own conversion, says that Ananias of

Damascus encouraged him to complete his conversion by being baptised: "Why tarriest thou? Rise up and be baptised and wash away thy sins, invoking his [Christ's] name" *Acts*, xx, 16. After the people in Samaria had been baptised by Philip, Peter and John were sent thither to confirm them . . . "Who, when they were come, praying for them that they might receive the Holy Ghost. . . then they laid hands on them and they received the Holy Ghost" *Acts*, viii, 15 and 17. The natural meaning of these texts is that the efficacy of the external rites is causal *ex opere operato*. When the Galatian converts began to return to the customs and ceremonies of the Old Law, St. Paul in his attempt to bring them back to Christian practices has these words, "But now, after that you have known God, or rather are known by God, how turn you again to the weak and needy elements, which you desire to serve again?" *Gal.* iv, 9. He calls the Old Law ceremonial "weak and needy" (*ἀσθενῆ καὶ πτωχὰ στοιχεῖα*), because they only conferred grace *ex opere operantis* by arousing faith in the coming Redeemer, and because they neither contained grace nor conferred it as true instrumental causes *ex opere operato*. The sacramental system invented by the Reformers is just as weak and needy!

The language of the earliest Apologists is naturally inconclusive, as their subject-matter and the *disciplina arcani* hindered explicit teaching on sacramental causality. Tertullian, nevertheless, is clear enough. In a quotation already given[1] he attributes, as emphatically as a man can, the effect of Grace to the external rite; a similar thought is expressed by him in his treatise on Baptism, "The anointing flows on the body (*carnaliter*), but does good to the soul; in the same

[1] See above, p. 57.

way the bodily act of Baptism by which we are plunged in water, has a spiritual effect by which we are cleansed from sin" (*De Bapt.* 4). Let Aphraates, a theologian who flourished in the third and fourth centuries, and St. Ephraem bear witness to the teaching of the Syrian Church. The former says, "By Baptism we receive the Spirit of Christ, and at the very moment the priests invoke the Holy Ghost He opens the heavens and descends, broods over the waters, and those who are baptised put on the Holy Ghost" (Graffin, *Patrol. Syr.* I, 191). That learned Doctor of the Universal Church, Ephraem, speaks quite plainly of the Holy Ghost "mingling Himself with the waters of Baptism to elevate them" to produce an effect which is above their nature, namely "the purification of the soul."[1] St. John Chrysostom likens the waters of Baptism to the vivifying powers of the maternal womb, "What the womb is to the embryo that the water is to the Christian, for he is moulded and formed in water . . . the water produces rational souls, bearers of the Holy Ghost" (*Hom. in Joann* xxvi, 1). St. Basil is equally clear, "If there is any grace in the water, it does not come from the nature of the water, but from the presence of the Holy Ghost" (*De Spiritu Sancto*, xv, 35). According to St. Cyril of Alexandria, "Just as water in caldrons when placed on the fire, receives the energy of the fire, so by the operation of the Holy Ghost the material water is transformed in a kind of divine and ineffable way and sanctifies all it touches" (*Comm. in Ioelem*, iii, 5). With the exception of Tertullian I have purposely avoided quotations from Latin writers, because I

[1] "*Divini Spiritus in igne figuram agnoscito, permiscetur aquis ut eas ad expiationem elevet.*" *Adv. Scrutatores*, Assemani, Vol. III.

desire to show that the Tridentine doctrine is not the invention of medieval theologians in the West.

The custom of the Church (dating from the earliest times) of baptising and confirming infants proves her belief in sacramental efficacy *ex opere operato*. There can be no question of the *opus operantis* where babies are concerned, and Chrysostom[1] declares that the precise reason for the baptism of infants is that they may *receive* sanctity, justice, divine adoption, *etc.*, that is, they are incapable of any active co-operation in the work of their own justification. Luther felt this difficulty so much that he invented a miraculous belief in infants; Calvin held that when these little ones reach the age of reason they remember that they have been baptised and so rouse up their faith. Such puerile wriggling is unworthy of comment. One naturally asks what happens to idiots who never acquire the use of reason, or to children who either never remember they were baptised or die before they attain the use of reason.

The sacraments therefore, under God, play a causal part in the infusion of grace; but, though it is certain that this causality is instrumental, there is much dispute among Catholic theologians as to the exact nature of sacramental causality. In treating of this controversy I must remind you at the outset that we have left the realm of defined dogma, and there is, therefore, no question of heresy or dangerous doctrine before us; we are concerned with a domestic debate between approved theologians of the Church. It is obvious, as St.Basil has already pointed out to us, that the material chrism, water, imposition of hands, *etc.*, cannot of themselves produce grace, an effect which is far above their natural powers. How then are they elevated to

[1] Fragment quoted by St. Augustine in his *Cont. Iul.* I, 6, 22.

bring about an effect which they most certainly produce when used in the sacramental rite? There are three possible solutions to this question: either (1) the sacrament by God's so willing it can move the Author of grace to bestow his gifts on the soul; or (2) this power of producing grace flows from God through the sacrament, and physically infuses grace into the soul, thus elevating the nature of the water, chrism, oil, *etc.*, to a higher order of causation; or (3) the sacraments by divine decree have the power of bringing about in the soul a disposition that demands grace. By adopting and defending one or other of the above solutions theologians have been divided into three distinct schools. All claim that their respective theories are in harmony with the Church's doctrine, and until the Church decides one way or another, that claim must be respected. As all three theories bristle with difficulties when fully developed, it follows that you will take the side of that school of thought whose arguments and defence appeal to you most.

That the sacraments are moral causes of grace is an opinion championed by the great Jesuit de Lugo, who has been followed by such distinguished thinkers as Franzelin, Hurter, Pesch, Sasse, Lahousse—all members of the Society of Jesus. According to de Lugo's view the sacraments do play an active part in the infusion of grace, but they do not act directly on the soul of the recipient. God alone is the physical cause of grace, while the sacraments by reason of their own intrinsic value, a value conferred on them by their divine institution, move God to pour forth His grace into the soul. They are morally speaking the actions of Christ, for Christ instituted them and they are administered in His name; thus their dignity and worth is

objective, and they move God, that is, give Him a reason for conferring grace, in somewhat the same way as a gold coin moves the seller to exchange his wares for it. In this wise the sacraments are the instruments of Christ which He employs in order to obtain from His Father the application of the merits of His Passion to the soul. This view must be distinguished from a pre-Tridentine theory favoured by St. Bonaventure, Scotus, Durandus and Gabriel Biel, which maintained that the sacraments resembled a token of no intrinsic value, but at the presentation of which God determined to infuse grace. A sacrament in this opinion can hardly be called a practical sign at all, and cannot be said to contain grace, or even confer it morally: it is not morally speaking Christ's action.

The second theory on the instrumental causality of the sacraments regards them as physical instruments of grace. By God's motion or influence the sacraments become efficient and secondary causes of grace, in a manner suggestive of an artist's brush, which in his capable hands physically contributes to the production of the painting. The parallel is of course not absolutely exact—*omnis comparatio claudicat*—but it is a good illustration. In the case of the sacraments the divine motion so elevates them that they bring about an effect of which, left to themselves, they are utterly incapable. I am myself convinced that this was St. Thomas's view, and as such it is explained and defended by Dominican theologians and by Suarez and B. Robert Bellarmine, both of the Society of Jesus. I venture in passing to call your attention to the following suggestion, which I make for what it is worth: it is this theory that has caused Dr. Barnes to talk so much about the "magical" sacramental system of the Church. He cannot believe,

that a spiritual power or virtue can be transmitted to a material thing such as water. There is, nevertheless, no intrinsic impossibility in a spiritual thing passing through a material channel. How else does God keep in being and motion created things? How else does the will control the locomotive faculties of the body? In any case, the opinion of a certain school of theologians is not the dogmatic teaching of the Church Catholic. I hope then that Dr. Barnes will leave physical causality alone, as he apparently does not understand it, and adopt de Lugo's view. There is nothing savouring of magic in that!

The third opinion held amongst theologians is not so wide-spread as the other two, chiefly because, in its present exposition at least, it is novel. Fr. Billot, S.J., is its champion, and he maintains that the instrumental causality of the sacraments is "intentional." The sacraments dispose the soul to receive grace, and in consequence their immediate effect on the soul is not grace itself, but a claim to grace impressed *ex opere operato* on the soul. This claim or title is not a physical quality, but rather something of the intentional or moral order, and is very much like a right which a person has to a certain object, or the power of jurisdiction which bishops and judges possess. By bringing about this title to grace the sacraments are true causes of grace *dispositive*, and, unless there is an obstacle in the recipient, the infusion of grace follows on the above-mentioned title immediately. This does not mean that in the order of time you have first the title and then the grace; there is only priority in the order of causation. According to Billot God alone is the physical cause of grace.

Such are the main outlines of what is a long, interest-

ing and intricate part of Catholic theology on the sacraments. Those whose interest has been sufficiently aroused by what I have said, will, I trust, penetrate further into this sublime science, for the study of theology should never be regarded as the private preserve of priest and religious. In the Middle Ages laymen enjoyed the study of questions both theological and philosophical, and there is no reason why the more leisured amongst us should not emulate the past.

# IV

# BAPTISM

By the Rev. C. Lattey, S.J., M.A.

## I: INSTITUTION

It is peculiar to Baptism, in the words of the Code of Canon Law (canon 737) to be "the gate and foundation of the Sacraments"; it is necessarily the first to be received, and the others can only be received after it. Hence it is in all treatises the first to be explained; it is not however the first in dignity, for the Holy Eucharist is that, being Christ Our Lord Himself, true God and true Man.

I propose to devote the first part of my paper mainly to the *institution* of Baptism. The historical case for Christ's institution of Baptism and of the Holy Eucharist is stronger than for the other sacraments, and since we are not treating the Holy Eucharist this year, Baptism becomes in a certain sense the crucial case. If anyone denies that Christ instituted these two sacraments, he is not likely to admit that He instituted any others. The twenty-fifth of the Thirty-nine official Articles of the Church of England, for example, explicitly asserts Baptism and "the Supper of the Lord" to have been ordained by Christ, but explicitly denies this of the other sacraments. Not that the explanation

given in this article of the nature of a sacrament is satisfactory; unfortunately, however, it is far more than we could hope to get from many Church-of-England ministers today, not to speak of a vast host of other mortals. It appears to be worth while, then, to give some idea of the strength of the historical case for Baptism; in the second lecture I shall treat chiefly of its nature and necessity. Only a few important topics can be dealt with in the time at my disposal, and those somewhat summarily.

(i) Before coming to the institution of the sacrament itself, it may be well to speak briefly of some *precedents* or types. Naturally upon the mention of such things the mind turns to various rites of cleansing; but the most important anticipation of Baptism was not itself such a cleansing with water, but the rite of circumcision. For according to what St. Thomas (*Sum. Theol.* iii, q. 70, a.4, *in corp.*) states to be the common opinion in his time, and which he repeats (*ibid.*, *sed contra*) from St. Augustine (*De Nuptiis et Concupiscentia*, Bk. II, chap. 11), circumcision removed original sin and conferred sanctifying grace, thus having the same effect as Baptism. Why then was it not itself a sacrament in the fullest sense? St. Thomas evidently felt the difficulty, for in the article already quoted he confesses to having changed his mind over the precise answer to be given; formerly he had maintained that the final effects of circumcision and Baptism were not quite the same, whereas now he admits that they are the same, but denies that they are obtained in the same way. For in Baptism grace is bestowed in virtue of the Baptism itself, which virtue it possesses as being an instrument whereby Christ's Passion, in this case al-

ready undergone, is effective; but in circumcision grace was bestowed, not precisely in virtue of the circumcision itself, but in virtue of faith in Christ's Passion, whereof circumcision was a sign. Such a faith was professed either by the circumcised person himself, if an adult, or by someone else in his behalf, in the case of babies; and St. Thomas refers to *Rom.* iv, 11, where St. Paul writes that Abraham "received the sign of circumcision as the seal of that justness of faith (or *faith-righteousness*, a justness based on faith) which was his in uncircumcision." In other words, as we should put it, circumcision did not confer grace, like a sacrament, directly *ex opere operato*, by its own instrumental power: nor yet simply *ex opere operantis*, in virtue of personal dispositions: but through faith in Christ, which the Old Testament Church or theocracy professed in the name of the infant through the rite instituted thereunto by Almighty God.

This, as has been said, is the most important precedent for Baptism, for it secured the same effect, though not in the same manner. For it is indeed to this unique effect that we must primarily look, and not to the mere symbolism of washing with water, which was common to many religions, and was found in the Old Testament. For our present purpose it may be enough to enumerate, as the chief effects of Baptism, easy to prove from the New Testament: the entire forgiveness of original and (if any) actual sin, the infusion of grace, and membership of the Church. To none of these three effects is there a close parallel in Old Testament or pagan washings; there might well have been, but the facts are the other way. I find it better therefore to omit all mention of pagan washings, and to refer instead to Prof. Coppens's treat-

ment of the subject in the supplement to the *Dictionnaire de la Bible.*[1]

The levitical purifications of the Old Testament would prepare the Jews' minds for the moral significance of the baptism of John. But St. John the Baptist himself drew a sharp contrast between his own baptism and that of the Messiah who was already among them: "I have baptised you with water, but he shall baptise you with the Holy Spirit" (*Mark* i, 8). He did not claim to give the baptism which the Messiah was to give. Taken in their more obvious sense, his words refer to the baptism which Christ was soon about to bestow (*John* iii, 22), so that we have in them a strong reason for following the commoner view (DB, 858), which is that of St. Thomas (*Sum. Theol.* iii, q.66, a.2, *ad* 2, *etc.*) and of Scotus (*In IV Sent., dist.* 3, *quaest.* 4), that Christ from the very first conferred the sacrament of Baptism itself, and not a mere preparatory rite which should give place to the sacrament after the Resurrection. Christ Himself from the first gave the sacrament its efficacy, but in virtue of the anticipated merits of His Passion (*Sum. Theol.* iii, q. 66, a.2, *ad* 1).

When we pass from circumcision, from Old Testament purifications and from the baptism of John, to later Jewish rites, we find ourselves faced by the confident statement that "for the interpretation of early Christian belief and practice in regard to Baptism we need look no farther than contemporary Rabbinic Judaism." In Dr. Gavin's *Jewish Antecedents of the*

[1] *Dictionnaire de la Bible*: *Supplément*, ed. Pirot: Paris, Letouzey: Vol. I: art. *Baptême;* col. 852-871 by Père d'Alès, S.J.: col. 871-924 by Prof. J. Coppens, of Louvain University. The reference above is to coll. 903-921. I quote this article henceforth as, for instance, DB. 903-921, the part referred to in the text.

*Christian Sacraments* (S.P.C.K., 1928), whence I take these words (p. 58), there is indeed much of interest and importance. Let me quote, for example, some excellent remarks of his on the subject of magic:

> We are overwhelmed to-day by a steady and consistent stream of propaganda which would induce or coerce us to recognize in all utilizations of the material for religious, ceremonial, or ritual ends the existence and presence of magic and superstition. This type of argument is plausible and apparently convincing until we delve into definitions in an attempt to clear the issue. . .
>
> What saves both Christian sacramentalism and the ceremonial and ritual practices of Judaism from any tinge or taint of the magical is the strong conviction of the divine authorization of these rites. (pp. 18, 21).

Unfortunately Dr. Gavin himself proceeds to attribute to the Jews both of Old Testament and rabbinical times a confusion of mind more than equal to anything we expect to find in the pontificalities of Dr. Barnes. He quotes with approval a saying of Dr. Moore's that the primitive rites for purification in the Priest's Code "originated in a time when no clear distinction was made between 'uncleanness' (infringement of a taboo), disease, and moral wrong" (p. 7). He himself would apparently have us believe that to the Jews "inadvertent transgression of certain ceremonial prohibitions" was as much sin as perverse acts of the will (*cf.* p. 8). If this were so, it would prove that their mentality and that of Our Lord and His Apostles were poles asunder, much too far parted in fact for any serious influence in the matter of sacramentalism. But

while it is true that both Christ and St. Paul found fault with the Jews for the length to which they pushed religious formalism, they did not accuse the Jews of being so blind as all that, nor need we do so. There does not appear to be any satisfactory proof, for example, that they ascribed sacramental effects to levitical washings

In the matter of baptism, however, one must first raise an objection upon the score of chronology. For his comparison with Christian rites Dr. Gavin brings forward a rabbinical rite for which he suggests as a date A.D. 135-140 (p. 32); but the two documents from which he reconstructs this rite appear to be much later, so that the date itself is far from certain. Even apart from this and some other difficult questions,[1] however, the fact remains that Jewish baptism was only for the proselytes; it was imposed for the abnormal, not for the hereditary and national fellowship of Israel. We are far from the peremptory words of the Gospels: "Unless a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into God's kingdom" (*John* iii, 5): "He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved, he that believeth not shall be condemned" (*Mk.* xvi, 16): "Make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (*Mt.* xxviii, 19). Such words impose a grave

[1] I may mention one point of some importance. The late Mr. Abrahams, formerly Reader in Talmudic in this university, thought that there was "no adequate ground for doubting that Jewish baptism in the first century was by total immersion" (*Journal of Theological Studies*, Vol. XII, 1910-1, p. 612). In Christian Baptism, on the other hand, "the essential rite consisted in the immersion of the lower part of the body and the pouring of water upon the head and the upper part" (*Dictionnaire d'Archéologie chrétienne*, etc., ed. Cabrol and Leclercq: art. *Immersions;* Vol. VII, col. 305: Paris, Letouzey, 1926: translation mine). Mr. Abrahams has a valuable chapter on *Pharisaic Baptism* in the first series of his *Studies in Pharisaism and the Gospels* (Cambridge, 1917).

and universal obligation, such as has never been laid on the born Jew.

Even in the case of the proselyte, Dr. Gavin, after remarking that "we have the verdict [of the rabbis] that a proselyte is like a newborn child," frankly confesses that "to the best of my knowledge we lack, however, the inference that the effect was wrought by baptism" (p. 53). He covers this glaring defect in his argument by a repetition of generalities to which I have already referred (pp. 10-12); but even if he were right in his estimate of the effect, it would have been more to the point to have harked back to what he had just said of circumcision, which was too important and essential a rite to be ignored in favour of baptism.

Dr. Gavin's remarks upon the Holy Eucharist, the only other sacrament which he discusses at length, are no less misleading, but fall outside my scope.

(ii) *The Moment of Institution.* I have already referred to the words in which the Baptist announced the greater baptism now about to be given by the Christ (p.76); these words do not explicitly state that the Christ is likewise to employ water for His Baptism, but they are more naturally understood thus, and every passage in the New Testament makes for this interpretation, which alone is worthy of serious consideration. As to the precise moment when Christ instituted the sacrament, there is some doubt. St. Thomas (*Sum. Theol.* iii, q. 66, a.2, *in corp.*) considers that the moment of institution was Christ's own baptism; but this is rather a difficult view, since Christ only received the baptism of John, and there is no sign of His having acted with such authority. Nor need the Fathers be pressed to mean this, when, for instance, they speak of Christ having

cleansed the waters by His Flesh that they might possess the right to baptise.[1] Scotus,[2] followed by Suarez and others, is content to leave uncertain the precise time of institution, while placing it between Christ's own reception of baptism and the baptising by His disciples (*cf. John* iii, 26; iv, 1-2). This latter necessarily supplies the later limit for those who hold the usual view (*cf.* p. 76) that the Baptism conferred by Christ through His disciples was sacramental.

(iii) *The Gospel of St. John.* Just before Our Lord began to baptise, He explained the necessity of the sacrament to Nicodemus. Not that it became obligatory at once, for, as St. Thomas remarks (*Sum. Theol.* iii, q. 66, a.2, *ad* 3; *cf. ibid. ad* 2), the sacraments were not obligatory until they were imposed under precept, and he does not consider that this was done until after the Resurrection. The meaning of Our Lord's words to Nicodemus has in part been defined by the Church; it is one of the very rare instances in which the meaning of a passage of Holy Writ has been so defined. The second canon of the Council of Trent about Baptism runs thus: "If anyone say that true and natural water is not of the necessity of Baptism, and therefore twist into some metaphor those words of Our Lord Jesus Christ, *Unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Spirit:* let him be anathema."

It is impossible to translate quite satisfactorily Our Lord's main sentence on Baptism. We may render provisionally: "Unless a man be born of water and Spirit,[3] he cannot enter into God's kingdom" (*John*

[1] *Cf.* St. Ambrose on *Luke*, Bk. 2, No. 83: St. John Chrysostom on *Matthew*, Hom. 12, No. 3. [2] *In IV Sent., dist.* 3, *quaest.* 4.

[3] The word "Holy" was not in the original Greek, nor yet in St. Jerome's original text of the Latin Vulgate.

iii, 5). The difficulty lies in the play on the word *Spirit*, which we could only reproduce were we in the habit of speaking of the Holy Ghost (I trust no irreverence will be found in my attempt at clear exegesis) as the "Holy Wind," and if "wind" possessed all the connotations of *spirit* and *spiritual*. That is what we find both in the case of the Latin *Spiritus* and the Greek πνεῦμα and even (though within narrower limits) of the Hebrew and Aramaic *ruah*. I must premise also that the word *spirit* in the New Testament is applied both to the Holy Spirit as acting on the human spirit, and to the human spirit as acted upon by the Holy Spirit; and there are intermediate uses (as here), in which the two are not sharply distinguished. All this, too, we should have to apply to our new term *wind*. The action of this supernatural *wind* is compared by Our Lord to that of natural wind; we hear the powerful gust, we see some of its effects, but (speaking generally) we know not the whence or whither thereof, nay, we cannot see the thing itself.

The comparison here made by Our Lord, the play upon the meaning of the word, was made, no longer in speech but in the very event, at the first Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit announced His presence by a violent blast of wind (*Acts* ii, 2). And the failure of the natural man to understand the supernatural action of the Spirit is set forth by St. Paul with great energy in *I Cor.* i,18—ii,16: suffice it to quote *I Cor.* ii, 14: "The natural man doth not accept the teaching [literally, the things] of the Spirit of God, for to him it is folly, and he cannot understand it." The Apostle likewise lays great stress again and again upon the entirely new life that is begun in Baptism: once more a single passage must suffice: "Know ye not that as

many of us as were baptised unto Christ Jesus were baptised unto his death? We were buried therefore with him through this Baptism unto death; that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also should walk in newness of life" (*Rom.* vi, 3-4). It is of this new life that Christ also speaks, a life that springs from "wind" and water—but not in the same way. "Wind" signifies the mighty power at work; the absence of the definite article in the Greek makes against a direct mention of the Holy "Wind" or Spirit, but none the less it is His action that is clearly indicated, it is His action that is the "wind" that begets "wind," it is precisely because of this "wind," here represented as verily working, that what was mere soul becomes itself "wind" or spirit, in virtue of being thus utterly supernaturalised.

The water is the instrument through which this effect is produced; it effects a supernatural and spiritual washing. Why should it be so? Well, why should we have the Incarnation at all? It was an immeasurable benefit that the Word should take flesh; and it is a part of that benefit that a visible rite should unite us to Him within and without, through grace and membership in His Church. Such issues do not belong to this paper. But it must be noted that the moment of Baptism is not necessarily the moment of the infusion of sanctifying grace, which may be won beforehand by perfect contrition, or may not be received even at the time, being hindered by the presence of unrepented mortal sin. On such points I do not wish to linger here, but merely to explain that Our Lord, once more followed by St. Paul (*e.g.*, *Gal.* iii, 23-29), is speaking of one great process, without analysing its various aspects and possibilities.

Following upon this doctrine we have Christ's own administration of Baptism (*John* iii, 22). It is the passage from teaching to practice; I have already explained (p. 76) that I prefer to follow the commoner (though not the only) Catholic view that from the beginning Christ conferred the sacrament itself. Not that He Himself administered the Baptism; St. John tells us that He did not do so, but that His disciples baptised (*John* iv, 2). In this matter the Apostles appear to have followed His practice; for St. Paul tells the Corinthians that he had baptised only a very few of them, Crispus and Gaius and the household of Stephanas, but none other that he remembered (*I Cor.* i, 14-17), and St. Peter *ordered* Cornelius and the rest of the company to be baptised, not therefore himself administering the sacrament (*Acts* x, 48). In the early days, indeed, the numbers of converts were probably too great, and the other needs of the infant Church too urgent, for the Apostles themselves to perform the ceremony. "Christ," says St. Paul in the passage just referred to, "hath not sent me to baptise, but to preach the gospel"; taken in their context, the words are perfectly plain and simple—he must leave the actual administration of the sacrament to others, just as (for example) a bishop would normally do nowadays.

But why do we read of no baptising in Galilee? Or to put the difficulty another way, why do we not read in the Synoptic Gospels that Christ baptised, but only in St. John? The most probable answer appears to me to be that Christ did not baptise in Galilee, or after the beginning of His ministry. He instituted the sacrament at once and set it in operation, in order to complete and explain the work of John; but the administration of the sacraments was normally to belong to

the ministry of the Church, not to His own. The Church was to be endowed with definite means of grace, instituted by Himself; this was at once a privilege and a restriction. But He, the Author and Dispenser of grace, was to be bound by no such restriction; He instituted Baptism, therefore, but would not Himself urge it. Doubtless His own immediate following had all been baptised, and indeed many Galilaeans besides; I see no sufficient reason for thinking (with Prof. Coppens, DB. 887) that the Holy Ghost came down on the first Pentecost upon an assembly that had only received the baptism of John.

(iv) Nevertheless the formal *command to baptise* all men only came after the Resurrection, bringing with it a universal obligation to accept Baptism, an obligation that can hardly be said to have existed before (*St. Thomas, Sum. Theol.* iii, q.66, a.2, *ad* 2 *et* 3). With Cardinal Bellarmine[1] we may date this obligation from the solemn promulgation of the New Law at the first Pentecost. We find this command in two important passages, both of which raise some difficulties, but we must remember that historically they are borne out both by the previous teaching and practice of Our Lord Himself (confirmed in various ways by what we know of the Baptist), and by the subsequent teaching and practice of the Apostles. Auguste Sabatier's reckless denial that it is possible to prove the institution of Baptism to be Our Lord's own act[2] is on a par with his refusal to admit that St. Paul claimed any authority over his Corinthian Christians save that of persuasion (the persuasion with which he really menaces them

[1] *De Controversiis; de Sacramento Baptismi*, cap. 5.

[2] *The Religions of Authority and the Religion of the Spirit*, Engl. Transl. 1904: p. 52.

being that of the rod!)[1] or that the institution of the Apostolic College itself is anything but a myth.[2] One wonders whether anything quite so crude would command any respect unless it were dumped upon us from abroad; biblical exegesis is an industry that would doubtless profit by a little discreet safeguarding.

Dr. C. J. Cadoux in his recent large work, *Catholicism and Christianity*, expresses himself more cautiously; it may be considered probable that Christ issued a command to baptise, "though it cannot be regarded as quite certain."[3] It is rather characteristic of the book that, having thus demolished Baptism itself in less than two pages, he proceeds to demolish the Catholic view of it in five. In fact, what appears to me most significant in this book, an up-to-date edition (so to speak) of Hase's similarly vast *Handbook to the Controversy with Rome*, is that it demolishes the authority of the Catholic Church, not by attempting to confront it with the authority of Christ or the Bible, but by involving all three in one ruin. We are left to the Inner Light, and to an Inner Light not our own—for that might lead us to some interesting forecasts for "Progressive Protestantism"—but to that of a Congregationalist, with no true idea of institutional religion. One feels that even Baptism has little or no chance of being approved.

(v) The first passage containing a general command to baptise is *Mk.* xvi, 16; the command is only there by implication, but it is none the less clear. "And he said to them, Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation. He that believeth and is

[1] *Ibid.*, pp. 70-71: *cf. I Cor.* iv, 21.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 76.

[3] *Catholicism and Christianity; A Vindication of Progressive Protestantism*, by C. J. Cadoux, M.A., D.D., *etc.* (1928): p. 405.

baptised shall be saved: he that believeth not shall be condemned." The commission is too clear to need interpretation; but it is urged on the other side that these verses (9-20) do not form part of St. Mark's original gospel and are therefore unreliable. The textual evidence is rather complex, and I cannot stop to detail it, but may refer for a short summary of the matter to the introduction to *Mark* in the Westminster Version. These final verses must unquestionably be accepted as inspired and canonical Scripture, owing to the Tridentine and Vatican decrees, which include all "parts" of books as found in the Latin Vulgate; these twelve verses certainly constitute a passage large enough to be reckoned a "part," whatever doubt there may be about shorter passages. But the Biblical Commission, under date of 26th June, 1912, denied that it was proved that Mark was not the author of these verses. It will be observed that this answer is essentially a denial of proof: also, that it is not inconsistent with a later addition to the gospel by St. Mark himself, just as the last chapter of St. John may have been added later by the same evangelist. For myself I can never feel sure that St. Mark, in his abrupt way, did not end the gospel originally with *Mk.* xvi, 8.

In any case one must protest against Dr. Cadoux's view, for instance, that the so-called "longer conclusion," given in the Vulgate, is not "real evidence."[1] The great textual critics, Westcott and Hort, at the end of their long note on the passage, conclude that the original ending was lost and another inserted, which latter "manifestly cannot claim any apostolic authority, but it is doubtless founded on some tradition of the apostolic age." Why they should judge it manifest

[1] *Catholicism and Christianity*, p. 405.

that it cannot claim any Apostolic authority they do not explain, but it should be noted that they take the tradition back to the Apostolic Age itself. This is doubtless due in part to the very early attestation of this conclusion—which St. Irenaeus, for example, explicitly quotes as St. Mark's own, well before the end of the second century[1]—and in part to its evident independence of the other Resurrection narratives. It is indeed precisely beause it is an independent testimony to Our Lord's commission to baptise that it has a great historical value, corroborating the narrative of St. Matthew. In the same way the historical evidence for the Virgin Birth of Our Lord is all the stronger because SS. Matthew and Luke, while both bearing strong witness to this central fact, show themselves otherwise entirely independent of each other in their early chapters.

(vi) The other passage which contains the general command to baptise is read towards the conclusion of St. Matthew's gospel: "make disciples of all the nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (*Mt.* xxviii, 19). Here the command is quite explicit, and the formula names the three Persons of the Blessed Trinity. This latter fact, however, raises the question of the primitive form of the sacrament, which I shall be discussing in my second lecture, and I leave over some points to be dealt with then; for the present I would point out in a general way that there is no serious reason, either external or internal, for suspecting the text. With regard to the external evidence, it must be enough to say here that the textual proof in its favour is overwhelming, and

[1] *Adv. Haereses*, III, x,6.

against it there is nothing that deserves consideration.[1] Nor can St. Matthew's Trinitarian formula be rejected upon internal grounds. The simple and symmetrical enumeration of the three Persons, it is true, has no precise parallel in the New Testament; but both in Our Lord's parting words in the third gospel (*Lk.* xxiv, 49), and at the Last Supper in the fourth (*Jn.* xiv, 16, 26; xvi, 7-15), He makes distinct mention of the three Persons. We infer, too, from St. Paul, and especially from the beautiful blessing which concludes his second Corinthian letter, that it was already customary to name them together.[2] In the *Didache*, a church manual of popular instruction probably dating from the first century, we already have the command to baptise "in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost" (chap. 7); but we note that for the writer this is evidently the same thing as to be baptised "in the name of the Lord" (chap. 9).

Dr. Cadoux, after admitting that "the usual wording" of this verse of *Matthew* "is probably the true text of the Gospel," remarks that "it is open to serious doubt whether Jesus ever really spoke the words here ascribed to Him" (p. 344). He offers "two weighty reasons . . . why they should be taken rather as reflecting the usage of the Church at the time when the

[1] In the opening number of the *Hibbert Journal* (October, 1902) the late F. C. Conybeare endeavoured to prove that the Trinitarian formula should be removed from the verse, but was solidly refuted by the late Dr. Chase, afterwards Bishop of Ely, in the *Journal of Theological Studies* for July, 1905. F. C. Conybeare was the well-known Armenian scholar; my friend Père Mariès, S.J., Professeur à l'Institut Catholique de Paris (Arménien classique), Chargé de Conférences à l'Ecole des Hautes Etudes (Philologie grecque), wrote a biographical notice of him, together with a valuable and exhaustive *Bibliographie critique*, in the *Revue des Etudes arméniennes*, Vol. VI, fasc.2, pp. 185-333 (reprinted, Paris, 1926).

[2] See also *I Cor.* xii, 4-6; *Eph.* iv, 4-6, and over a score of other passages (DB. 860).

Gospel was written." The first is that "early Christian baptism was always in the name of Jesus, not in the name of the Trinity." This point I shall discuss more fully in the second part, and shall only say here that this phrase, "to baptise in the name of," did not necessarily signify the actual form of words employed; consequently, that the Christians need never have felt the contradiction that presents itself to Dr. Cadoux. Dating *Matthew* about 85 (p. 344), which is very late, and the *Didache* with its Trinitarian formula about 90 (pp. 344, 397), which may well be correct, he takes the Gospel, as has been said, to "reflect the usage of the Church," whereas it is more likely to have produced it.

His other "weighty reason" against the historical character of the Matthaean command to baptise in the name of the Trinity is the supposed fact that "the early Jewish Christian Church showed very considerable reluctance to undertake the evangelisation of the Gentile peoples (see *Gal.* ii, 6-9; *Acts* x; xi, 1-18; especially xi, 18). This reluctance is quite unaccountable if one of the latest utterances of Jesus on earth had been an explicit command in the terms of *Mt.* xxviii, 18-19" (p. 344). Now this question of the evangelisation of the Gentiles is a large, and in some respect a difficult one; but the consideration of Dr. Cadoux's references makes me feel confident that he has confused two issues, that of the evangelisation itself, and that of the terms upon which it was to be made. The real question was not whether the Gentiles were to be evangelised,—there was no "very considerable reluctance" about that—but whether they were to be compelled to submit to the Mosaic Law, and more especially to circumcision. Unless we keep these two

issues quite distinct, the history of the Apostolic Age is thrown into utter confusion.

(vii) I pass now from Our Lord's command to baptise to the actual *practice of the Apostles*. Nothing indeed is more striking than the unhesitating stress they lay upon the absolute necessity of the sacrament, itself a sufficient guarantee that they had received an explicit precept on the subject. On the very day of Pentecost, at the first sermon of Peter, the multitude ask, "What are we to do, brethren?" And at once comes his answer, "Let each of you be baptised in the name of Jesus Christ" (*Acts* ii, 37-38). When the Samaritans believed Philip, they were baptised (viii, 12), and it was upon those baptised that Peter and John bestowed Confirmation in completion of his work (viii, 14-17). Philip also baptises the eunuch of the queen of Ethiopia (viii, 38), and Ananias baptises St. Paul (ix, 18). In the same way St. Peter gives order that Cornelius and those with him be baptised (x, 48); and so on. There is no testing of psychological effects in all this, no stimulating of the Inner Light, no esoteric initiation by the local magician: it is simply a thing that has got to be done, and without which one is not a Christian.

Nevertheless this is not a blind external formalism, but is inspired by a full understanding of the inward and outward significance attached to the act by Christ Himself, and of its place in the whole dispensation of the Incarnation. This understanding expresses itself in the rich theology of the New Testament writers, and most of all of St. Paul. It is a theology of regeneration, of incorporation with Christ, of redemption, of illumination, of sealing and anointing (DB. 864-871); it is fruitfully developed by the Fathers of the Church, and

is the solid foundation upon which the Catholic Church builds her teaching to-day. It is one of several important topics which I must forbear to treat.

## II: NATURE AND NECESSITY

In considering the institution of Baptism we have perforce considered its nature also, but not in the more systematic way wherein it is now time to speak of it. "A sacrament," we learn in our catechism, "is an outward sign of inward grace, ordained by Jesus Christ, by which grace is given to our souls." It is essentially therefore a sign, but a sign that effects the inward grace which it signifies. Baptism by the pouring of water over the body signifies a washing, but as a sacrament it is a spiritual washing which it effects, the washing away of original sin and (if any) of actual sin. In the same way the Holy Eucharist, by offering as food what has the appearance of bread and wine, signifies feeding, nutrition; but as a sacrament it is a spiritual nutrition which it effects, the nourishment of the spiritual life of the soul.

I shall not linger upon the more complicated and almost obsolete analysis of the sacrament into *sacramentum tantum*, *res et sacramentum*, *res tantum*,[1] but

[1] This analysis must go back to the beginnings of Scholasticism, though for exact details we must perhaps await the progress of the mighty work being brought out by Père de Ghellinck, S.J., and other Louvain fathers: *Pour l'histoire du mot "Sacramentum"* (Vol. I, 1924). The analysis into matter and form Père d'Alès (*De Baptismo*, p.31) first finds in Gulielmus Altissiodorensis (*d.* 1230). The sacraments are not easily (as it were) forced into one mould or pattern, which may account for the different methods of analysis, and also for the fact that it is apparently not till the twelfth century (d'Alès, *De Baptismo*, p.6) that their number was established as seven.

shall consider it under the usual headings of matter and form, taken from the analogy of living substances.

(i) The remote *matter*, as we call it, of Baptism is water; water is essential and is sufficient. The external washing is the application of that water, and constitutes the proximate or immediate matter, the matter properly so called. Baptism can be conferred by immersion, infusion or aspersion. Aspersion or sprinkling never appears to have been much favoured or practised; there is an evident risk about this method, but if the water flow upon the skin of the head there can be no doubt that it is valid matter of the sacrament.

Immersion, on the other hand, was largely practised in ancient times, and the baptisteries were constructed for it. It "consisted in the immersion of the lower part of the body and the pouring of water upon the head and the upper part," in this differing from Jewish baptism (*cf.* p. 78 note). It is remarked in the article *Immersions* of the *Dictionnaire d'Archéologie* that in the West Baptism by immersion ceased as a regular practice in the eighth century at the latest; Infant Baptism was becoming more and more common, and the clergy were taking a stand against the late baptism of adults. It is likewise probable that in the North a feeling against nakedness made itself felt, unknown to the Graeco-Roman world; for the strictest nakedness was the rule in Baptism by immersion. The coldness of the water, too, was disagreeable, and might even be dangerous. Total immersion is still practised by the Copts and Abyssinians, but it does not seem likely that it was primitive. Baptism by infusion or pouring is the only method now in regular use in the Latin church; for a certainly valid Baptism, as has been

mentioned, the water must flow upon the skin of the head.

It has been said that the immediate matter of Baptism, to use Scotus's convenient terminology (*cf.* D'Alès, *De Baptismo*, p. 34) is the application of the water, the external washing. This implies that the *sacramentum tantum*, the outward sign of the sacrament, is the sign of washing. St. Paul is alluding to this sign of Baptism when he writes that "Christ loved the Church, and delivered Himself up for her, that He might sanctify her, purifying her in the bath of water by means of the word" (*Ephes.* v, 25-26), and again when he writes that Christ has saved us by means of "the bath of regeneration" (*Tit.* iii, 5); and there are some other New Testament passages to the same effect. All Tradition, needless to say, is full of this doctrine. It is true that St. Paul likens Baptism to death and burial, in order to lay stress upon the death of "the old man" and upon the new life that is given by the sacrament. "Know ye not, that as many of us as were baptised unto Christ Jesus, we were baptised unto his death? We were buried therefore with him through this baptism unto death, that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also should walk in newness of life" (*Rom.* vi, 3-4; *cf.* p. 81). Nevertheless if we consider this passage carefully, we shall see that the main emphasis is on inward death and burial and resurrection, rather than upon the sacramental symbolism as such.

Père de la Taille, indeed, in his great work *Mysterium Fidei*, wherein I find so much that is brilliant and of permanent value, both in his main thesis and in the treatment of several other Eucharistic questions, takes another view of this subject. For him the strictly

sacramental symbolism of Baptism, both in St. Paul and the Fathers, is properly speaking the symbolism of burial (*Mysterium Fidei*, ed. 2, p. 561). I have already made it plain that I cannot agree to this view of St. Paul. No doubt the Fathers of the Church are greatly influenced in their language by his words in *Rom.* vi, 3-4, and probably also by the baptisteries and the whole practice of baptising in their time. But they do not lose sight of that washing which is the essential sign of the sacrament. It will be enough in the short space at my disposal to touch on St. Augustine, on whom Père de la Taille lays stress. Commenting on *John* xv, 3 ("Ye are clean because of the word which I have spoken to you"), he asks, "Why does he not say, Ye are clean because of the Baptism wherewith ye have been *washed* . . . unless because it is the word that cleans through the water," that is, the word of the baptismal formula. "Whence this so great power of water, to touch the body and *wash* the heart, unless the word effected this?" And there is more to the same effect throughout the section,[1] showing that Augustine looked upon Baptism as a sacrament of washing. Other passages might be quoted.[2]

But it is the Schoolmen, with their sharp eye for scientific precision and the definition of essentials, who really settle the question. I think it may be said in general that they define Baptism as a washing, and have no thought of it as being sacramentally a burial. This is true of St. Thomas (*Sum. Theol.* iii, q.66, a.1, *etc.*) of Peter Lombard, the Master of the Sentences

[1] *In Ioannem*, tract. 80, sect.3: Migne, P.L., 35. 1840.

[2] *E.g.*, *Contra Faustum*, lib. 12, cap. 17: P.L., 42.263: *Contra duas epist. Pelag.*, lib. 3, cap. 3, sect. 5: P.L., 44.590. Later on in this paper I have occasion to make a relevant quotation from St. Augustine's teacher, St. Ambrose (p. 103).

(Bk. 4, dist. 3), of Scotus (in his comment on the above, *quaestio* 1), of Bellarmine (*De Controversiis: de Sacramento Baptismi*, cap. 1), and among moderns, to quote our modern Petavius, of Père d'Alès (*De Baptismo*, thesis 2). The general practice can also be brought up in favour of washing, now that immersion (which offered a closer resemblance to burial) has practically fallen out of use, and it is the flowing of water on the head that is explicitly regarded as essential. Though, indeed, in any case water is not a suitable element to designate burial, which would be better represented by dropping handfuls of earth on our babies, if our purpose were to give them such symbolic burial. Surely Père de la Taille will not deny the sacramental symbolism of washing? And yet it would be hardly less strange to suppose two sacramental symbolisms, totally unconnected, in the same sacrament.

(ii) So much for the matter of the sacrament; the *form* presents a more perplexing issue. The root of the difficulty lies in the fact that, whereas St. Matthew's gospel closes with Our Lord's command to baptise in the name of the three Persons of the Blessed Trinity, we seem to find the Apostles in the *Acts* actually baptising "in the name of Jesus Christ" (*Acts* ii, 38; x, 48) or "of the Lord Jesus" (*Acts* viii, 16; xix, 5).

Now in the first place, it may be well to observe that there does not seem to be any noteworthy difference of meaning in the New Testament between "in the name" and "into the name." There is much interchange between the two prepositions (εἰς and ἐν) in contemporary Greek, and both appear to represent the same Hebrew and Aramaic original. The command to baptise (*Mt.* xxviii, 19) reads literally, "*into* the name

of the Father"; and in *Mt.* xviii, 20, we read "where two or three are gathered together *into* my name." In both cases the sense and English usage require that we translate, "in my name." I shall not dwell further upon this point.

In the second place, the phrase "in the name of" need not imply the use of those very words as a spoken formula. In order to do something in the name of God or in the name of Christ it is not necessary to repeat these very words; the very circumstances may make the fact clear. We may say truly, for example, that all a priest does in the discharge of his office is done in the name of God or Christ; but he is not for ever saying so. In the same way we need not suppose the use of a formula when Barnabas narrates how Paul "had spoken out boldly in Damascus in the name of Jesus," or when St. Luke adds immediately that he did the same in Jerusalem "in the name of the Lord" (*Acts* ix, 27-28), or in the cry of the multitude on Palm Sunday, "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord" (*Mt.* xxi, 9, *etc.*, from *Psalm* cxviii [cxvii], 26).

If, then, the Apostles had baptised simply in Our Lord's name during His public ministry, they would not necessarily feel that the final command in *Mt.* xxviii, 19, prescribed a new formula, though the command would sooner or later have the result of bringing the formula into regular use. They might well feel that they were already baptising in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. The constant and exclusive mention in the *Acts* of Baptism in Christ's name (ii, 38; viii, 16; x, 48; xix, 5; *cf. I Cor.* i, 13) does leave on one the powerful impression that this was the actual formula used; and there is also a weighty body of opinion to that effect. M. Jacquier in his great com-

mentary on the *Acts* (Paris, 1926: on *Acts* ii, 38) quotes in favour of this view St. Ambrose, the Venerable Bede, the Master of the Sentences, Hugh of St. Victor, and St. Thomas Aquinas; to these Father Pesch, S.J., in his *Praelectiones Dogmaticae* (Herder, 1900: Vol. VI, ed. 2, p. 157) adds Cajetan (whose text was afterwards changed), Toletus, Albertus Magnus, Alexander of Hales, St. Bonaventure and Scotus, mentioning also that most of the Thomists and Scotists have followed these their masters. Thus we may say that the exegete who maintains that the Apostles baptised in the name of Christ has on his side the whole body of the mediaeval Schoolmen, and many others besides; it is a view beyond all reproach.[1]

But would this formula still be valid? This is a far more difficult question. That it would be gravely unlawful, nobody doubts; the validity is at least uncertain, and even apart from this all must use the form prescribed by the Church. With regard to validity, St. Thomas (*Sum. Theol.* iii, q.66, a.6, *ad* 1) holds that it was by a special revelation from Christ that the Apostles baptised in the name of Christ in the early Church, in order that His name might be honoured. In the same article he has insisted that the Trinitarian formula is essential to validity now, so that he implies a special exception or dispensation for the Apostles. Scotus (for a wonder) agrees with him (*In IV Sent.*, dist. 3, qu.2), and Father Pesch (*loc. cit.*) assures us that the Thomists and Scotists as a body have followed

[1] In the Apocryphal *Acts of Paul*, probably written about A.D. 160, Thecla jumps into a tank of water, saying, "In the name of Jesus Christ do I baptise myself on the last day" (M. R. James, *The Apocryphal New Testament*, Oxford, 1924: pp. 270, 279-280). Though the story is as legendary as that of St. Paul baptising the lion (for which see *The Times Literary Supplement*, May 23, 1929: p. 412), it may point to a survival of Baptism "in the name of Jesus Christ."

suit once more. Nevertheless this is a difficult view because, as Bellarmine says (*De Controversiis: de Sacramento Baptismi*, cap. 3), "neither in Scripture, nor in any council, nor in the Fathers do we read of such a dispensation," and he himself thinks it a "more solid" answer that the Apostles used the Trinitarian formula. In this Père d'Alès follows him, but with less confidence. The question therefore arises, if with all the older Scholastics we believe that the Apostles baptised merely in Christ's name, and if we feel the difficulty of this theory of a special dispensation for them, may we hold that Baptism in Christ's name only, while quite unlawful, would still be valid?

There are in fact authorities for the view that such a Baptism would be valid, and I cannot feel that full justice is always done to them; there is perhaps a tendency to explain them away too easily. The most weighty document is one of the answers of Pope St. Nicholas I to the Bulgarians in 866. There is a question of many persons who have been baptised by a Jew, of whom it is not known whether he was a Christian or not. "If these have been baptised in the name of the Holy Trinity," writes the pope, "or merely in the name of Christ, as we read in the *Acts of the Apostles* (for it is one and the same thing, as St. Ambrose explains), it is certain that they are not to be baptised again." The decision is the pontiff's own, and it is based mainly upon the *Acts*, though also in part upon St. Ambrose. Nor can I think that he has misunderstood St. Ambrose, whom nevertheless I may not linger to expound,[1] but I conclude upon this

[1] St. Ambrose, *De Spiritu Sancto*, Bk. I, chap. 3, sect. 42: if Father or Son or Holy Ghost be named in Baptism, *plenum est fidei sacramentum*, the sacrament is valid. The Ven. Bede (on *Acts* x, 48) understands St. Ambrose in this sense, and so does the Master of the Sentences

question in the words of Scotus: "I do not dare to say that one baptised to-day in the name of Christ would be baptised: but neither do I dare to say that he would not be baptised" (*In IV Sent.*, dist. 3, qu.2). But when he goes on to give his reason, "because I do not read that the dispensation was anywhere revoked," I would go on with Bellarmine, already quoted (p. 98), to question the necessity of supposing a special dispensation granted to the Apostles to use a formula otherwise invalid.

I am of course aware of the great weight of authority on the other side; but a number of the texts brought forward cannot be said with certainty to bear upon the precise issue. They prove the absolute obligation to use the Trinitarian formula, both because it is prescribed by the Church in her ritual and because it is the only certain one; but often they cannot be shown to contradict the speculative opinion that a baptism administered in Christ's name may be valid. Nor do they in any case attain infallibility, any more than the answer of Pope St. Nicholas which I have quoted satisfies the conditions of infallibility. Père d'Alès (*De Baptismo*, p. 53) draws up a formidable list of ecclesiastical documents, but only Pope Pelagius I (if I may repeat a phrase used by Father Ronald Knox at a former School) scores a direct hit. In his letter to Bishop Gaudentius (*c.* 560) he certainly appears to reject as invalid Baptism administered only in the

(Bk. 4, dist. 3) and Scotus (in the passage quoted above). St. Thomas (*Sum. Theol.* iii, q.66, a.6, *ad* 2 *et* 3) appears to understand St. Ambrose and St. Nicholas to refer to Apostolic times; but this is not plausible. Here, as so often in this treatise (and also elsewhere), St. Ambrose is drawing upon St. Basil (*De Spiritu Sancto*, chap. 12, sect. 28); but I doubt whether he interprets him correctly. St. Jerome, in a letter to Paula (Migne, *P.Lat.*, Vol. 16, p. 699) makes an unwarrantably scornful reference to the compilation of St. Ambrose's work from the Greek.

name of Christ. But no one would maintain that this letter is infallible.[1]

(iii) With that I leave the question of the form, and pass on to consider very briefly the *effects* of the sacrament, external and internal.[2] The external effect is of great importance, whether the sacrament be received worthily or unworthily. By Baptism, as the Code of Canon Law now lays down (canon 87) a person is constituted a member of the Church of Christ, with all the rights and duties of such members. All the baptised are by that very fact subject to the jurisdiction of the Church; the non-baptised are not. The baptised are so subject of right, *de iure*; but in actual fact, *de facto*, they may withdraw themselves from the Church and reject her jurisdiction. If they do so with full knowledge and consent, they are guilty of the grave sin of schism, whether they add heresy to it or not; but the Church does not lose thereby her rights over them, nor in reality does she cease altogether to exercise them, since it depends upon her will what obligations remain upon the schismatics. And the same is in the main true of the excommunicated.

[1] Before leaving the subject of form, I may mention a point raised by Père d'Alès (*De Baptismo*, pp. 58-59), chiefly on the basis of an important article by Père Lebreton, S.J., in the *Recherches de Science Religieuse* (Vol. 8, 1918, pp. 1-35: *Le Dogme de la Trinité dans l'ancienne Eglise chrétienne*). There appear to be some grounds for supposing that of old in the rite of Baptism the essential invocation of the Blessed Trinity was sometimes contained in the questions of the minister and the answers of the catechumen, rather than in any formula uttered by the minister during the very act of baptising. The matter awaits further research and discussion.

[2] I do not stop to explain that the sacraments work *ex opere operato*; this belongs to a previous paper. Père d'Alès (*De Baptismo*, p.8) gives as the first example of the use of this phrase, though not quite with the same sense, Petrus Pictaviensis (*d.* 1205), *Sententiarum Libri V*: lib. v, cap. 6: Migne, P.L. Vol. 211, col. 1235.

If it be through "invincible ignorance" that the baptised reject the jurisdiction of the Church (and Pius IX insisted long ago how difficult it is to set any limit to possible invincible ignorance[1]), they are said to be only *material* (not *formal*) schismatics, and such merely material schism will not of itself be any hindrance to their salvation if they die in it. But observe, this does not warrant them in flattering themselves that we recognise them as full members of the Catholic Church, and that all is well with them. They are not full members, since they are refusing the Church of God their obedience, and are giving it instead to a body which it is their grave duty to quit. All is not well with them, since it is only their utter ignorance of Almighty God's purpose in the New Testament (always supposing such ignorance to be there) which excuses them from mortal sin and the deserving of hell. It is necessary to speak plainly, because the Catholic position in this matter has been misrepresented and misunderstood—not that I wish to make any accusation of bad faith. But for further treatment of this question I may refer to the Summer School book on the Church (*The Church*: Heffer, Cambridge, 1928), and especially to the able paper on *Jurisdiction* by my colleague Father Geddes.

Internally the primary effect of Baptism is the *character*, the mark or seal upon the soul which cannot be effaced, and which makes it impossible to repeat the sacrament. The elucidation of the true nature of the character owed much to Alexander of Hales,[2] one of the chief glories of the English Franciscan school, and the first of the great Aristotelian

[1] Allocution of December 9, 1854: Denzinger, 1647.
[2] *Cf.* his *Sum. Theol.*, pars. IV, q.8, m. 8; a.1.

theologians, whose *Summa Theologiae* had much influence on St. Thomas himself. He appears also to have brought into Scholastic usage the term *Mystical Body of Christ* for the Church.[1] Later on Scotus wavered on the subject of the character, but leant to the more objective view of Alexander and St. Thomas, though still doing his best to pick holes in the latter's arguments.[2]

It is by the character that we most easily explain the delayed action of the sacrament in those who receive it unworthily; it is there all the time, requiring the remission of all guilt and all punishment, as soon as the unworthy recipient acquires the proper dispositions.[3] All this may be called the effect of Baptism upon its negative side; upon its positive side there is the infusion of sanctifying grace and of the virtues, together with the actual graces sufficient, and more than sufficient, for perseverance.

(iv) Coming now to the *necessity* of Baptism, we may note at once that this has been defined in general terms by the Council of Trent (Sess. 7: canon 5 on Baptism). Baptism is necessary, not merely as imposed by a law ignorance of which might excuse from obedience, but as the divinely constituted means of salvation without which, speaking generally, salvation cannot be obtained. Only in two special cases can the main effect of grace be obtained in another way. The first of these ways we call *Baptism of desire*. An act of perfect supernatural charity always justifies a man and puts him into a state of grace, either before Baptism or after it.

[1] *Cf. The Church* in this series, p. vii.

[2] *In IV Sent.* dist. 6, q.10.

[3] Père Billot lays considerable stress upon the *res et sacramentum* of the sacraments (which in Baptism would be the character) from this point of view (*De Ecclesiae Sacramentis*, Rome, ed.3: Vol. I, p.96).

Nor is it necessary that he should so love God in Himself as to retain no inclination to venial sin; but it is essential that he renounce for this motive all attachment to mortal sin. This renunciation must at least be implicit; it is not necessary that he make an explicit act of contrition. If this act of perfect love of God be made before Baptism, though it justifies of itself at once, it necessarily contains at least an implicit desire of Baptism, as of all that God commands under grave sin; otherwise it would not be the perfect love it is.

The classical text, one may say, upon the subject of Baptism of desire is the sermon preached by St. Ambrose in 392 at the funeral of Valentinian II, who while yet a catechumen had been murdered by Count Arbogastes. It is a beautiful discourse, full of eloquent grief and affection. After mentioning that Valentinian had actually asked him for Baptism but a little time before, he exclaims, "Has he not therefore the grace which he desired? Has he not the grace for which he asked? Certainly, because he asked for it, he received it." And he goes on to draw an argument from Baptism of blood, as we call it, saying of catechumens who have been martyred, "If these are washed in their own blood, him also his piety and his desire washed" (*De Obitu Valentiniani*, chapters 51, 53). This simple use of "washing" for Baptism illustrates an earlier point in my paper, that Baptism *is* essentially a washing in its sacramental signification (*cf.* p. 94).

This *Baptism of blood* is, in fact, the other possible substitute for the Baptism of water; it is martyrdom. By martyrdom we understand in general the patient endurance of a death inflicted out of hatred for the faith or on account of the exercise of some Christian virtue; I am happily absolved from any further dis-

cussion of the subject by Father Ronald Knox's excellent paper upon it last year. Nor does Baptism by blood itself call for any long explanation; it produces its effect of itself on those who place no obstacle in the way, which obstacle could only be a deliberate attachment to mortal sin. The most interesting example of the Baptism of blood is to be found in the Holy Innocents, of whom St. Thomas, following a constant tradition (*cf.* d'Alès, *De Baptismo*, pp. 143-7) writes that they "attained by the favour (*gratiam*, grace) of God what is merited in others by their own will. For the shedding of blood for Christ takes the place of Baptism. Wherefore as in baptised infants the merits of Christ effect through baptismal grace the obtaining of glory, so also in those slain for Christ the merits of Christ[1] effect the gaining of the palm of martyrdom" (*Sum. Theol.* ii-ii, q.124, a.1, *ad* 1).

These words of St. Thomas naturally lead us to the subject of Infant Baptism. The practice began very early; we cannot say how early. Tertullian (*De Baptismo*, chap. 18), St. Cyprian (*Ep.* 64, ed. Hartel) and Origen (Comm. on *Romans*, Rufinus's Latin translalation, Bk. 5, chap. 9) all bear witness to it. Tertullian in fact enters a protest against it, but on grounds of expediency, not of doctrine. The present law of the Church is contained in canon 770 of the Code: "Let infants be baptised as soon as possible: and let parish priests and preachers often admonish the faithful of their grave obligation in this respect."

(v) The necessity of Baptism brings us face to face

[1] Most of the manuscripts read here, "the merits of the martyrdom of Christ," but the word "of the martyrdom" (*martyrii*) appears to have slipped in by mistake from the same word immediately following, and is not found in all manuscripts.

with a very serious question, *the salvation of the non-baptised*, so terribly numerous even in this so-called Christian country.[1] And yet God "wisheth all men to be saved and to come to knowledge of truth" (*I Tim.* ii, 4). To this problem I shall devote the rest of my paper.[2] In the first place the obvious means of salvation for the non-baptised is, of course, Baptism of desire.[3] But even for this Baptism supernatural faith is necessary. Such an act is possible, even where there is "invincible ignorance" of the true religion. But the grave question arises, what is the minimum that even so *must* be believed? For the time subsequent to the coming of Christ St. Thomas (*Sum. Theol.* ii-ii, q.2, a.7, *in corp.*) requires from all "explicit faith in the mysteries of Christ, especially those which are commonly celebrated in the Church and publicly propounded." But of the time before the coming of Christ, after some rather doubtful exegesis and history

[1] To speak of this country alone, Mr. Hilliard Atteridge, for example, in an article in the *Month* for February, 1923 (*Is England a Protestant Country?*, Vol. 141, p. 115), comes to the conclusion that "half of the people of England and Wales are in no real membership with any Christian Church." It is astounding to find the Salvation Army, which professes to believe in the Bible, not practising Baptism or any other sacraments.

[2] On the general question see especially Père d'Alès in the *Dictionnaire Apologétique;* Vol. IV, Paris, 1928: art. *Salut des Infidèles.*

[3] St. Paul in *I Cor.* xv, 29, seems to imply that the Corinthians are practising some sort of vicarious baptism for the dead; but he mentions no details, nor does he praise or blame it, only arguing that it logically implies belief in the resurrection. St. Epiphanius (*Haer.* xxviii, 6) mentions such a practice of vicarious baptism among the Cerinthian heretics. We read also in St. John Chrysostom (*ad loc.*) that among the Marcionites when a catechumen had died unbaptised, they hid a living person under the bed, and then asked the deceased whether he wished to receive Baptism; the person under the bed replied in the affirmative, and was then "baptised for the dead." The whole question of "baptism for the dead" is treated fully by Prof. Mangenot in the *Dictionnaire de Théologie catholique*, Vol. 2, col. 360-4, s.v. *Baptême pour les morts*: Paris, 1910. At the best such a substitutional rite would be useless, and it might easily lead to erroneous doctrine or even sacrilege.

he writes: "If however some were saved to whom a revelation was not made, yet they were not saved without faith in a Mediator; for though they had not explicit faith, yet they had an implicit faith in Divine Providence, believing that God was the liberator of men in ways pleasing to Himself, and according to what the Spirit had revealed to some that knew that truth" (*ibid. ad* 3).

Now it is an obvious extension of this principle to suppose that what was enough in the Old Testament would be enough now for men living in this respect practically in the same ignorance; and all the more so because St. Thomas and his contemporaries appear to have considered that the gospel had been preached to the great mass of mankind, whereas later the discovery of America and the better knowledge of other lands made it only too clear what vast numbers still remained to be evangelised. Suarez (*De Fide*, disp. 12, sect. 4, no. 18) considers that explicit faith in Christ *in voto*, in desire, may be enough, which may be explained more simply as implicit faith; and this doctrine has prevailed since his time. For what is necessary and sufficient for salvation we are thus thrown back upon *Heb.* xi, 6: "Without faith it is impossible to please God; for he that approacheth unto God must believe that He doth exist, and is a rewarder to those who seek Him." This supernatural faith in God revealing Himself to be and to reward is all that need be explicit; but the difficulty is to arrive at what is truly assent to that which God reveals, and because He reveals it.

So much for Baptism of desire; but there is also another avenue to be explored, of which it is more difficult to speak with certainty. It is the extension of the limbo of unbaptised infants. Of these St. Thomas

says (*In II Sent.*, dist. 33, q.2, a.2 *ad* 5) that "although unbaptised infants are separated from God in respect of that union which is effected through glory [the supernatural glory of the blessed in heaven], still they are not separated from Him altogether; on the contrary, they are united with Him through partaking in good things of the merely natural order, and in this way they will also be able to rejoice in Him through a merely natural knowledge and love." All this is accepted Catholic doctrine; but Mivart in his *Nineteenth Century* article on *Happiness in Hell* (December, 1892: Vol. 32, p. 905) is reading too much into St. Thomas's words when he quotes them to support his statement that unbaptised infants "enjoy an eternity of natural happiness and union with God, beyond anything we can imagine or conceive of." Let us keep such words as these last for heaven!

He goes on to say, however, that "this principle may, on the authority of Balmez and other Catholic authorities, be extended to the case of adults, especially in heathen nations, who die with their moral and intellectual faculties so imperfectly developed as to be, in this matter, like children. That such a belief was not uncommon in earlier times is shown us by Dante, who depicts Virgil and other pagan worthies in a state of natural happiness."

Mivart relies in part upon an important article in the *Dublin Review* for January, 1881 (3rd series, Vol. V) entitled *Everlasting Punishment*, and directed mainly against Farrar, whose views upon the subject were thought revolutionary then, but would cause little stir now; other Catholic authorities may be found in Père d'Alès's article, *Salut des Infidèles*, already quoted (*Dict. Apol.*, Vol. IV, col. 1164). St. Thomas, it should be

observed, precludes such a view as Mivart's, holding instead that when a child comes to the use of reason, "the first thing that comes to his mind is to deliberate about himself. And if he directs himself to his proper end, he will obtain through grace the remission of original sin; but if he does not direct himself to his proper end, so far as he is capable of discretion at that age, then he will sin mortally" (*Sum. Theol.* i-ii, q.89, a.6, *in corp*). Hence upon reaching the use of reason every human being would come to be either in a state of grace or in mortal sin, from which latter of course he could rescue himself by repentance. But he has been given his chance of being raised to the supernatural order; the case of the unbaptised adult who is still equivalently an infant in such matters cannot arise.

St. Thomas's view, however, is not forced upon us by Scripture or Tradition, nor is it easy to reconcile with experience; Père d'Alès shows (*ibid.* col. 1166) that the Dominican school itself has hesitated to follow him. It is significant also that Dante, "the poet of St. Thomas," as Mr. Bullough at a former Summer School so well showed him to be,[1] should in this matter have deserted him. On the other hand Père Billot in a series of articles in *Etudes*, from October, 1919 to August, 1923, opened very wide the limbo of infants to the pagans, maintaining that a very large proportion of them do not attain a moral development sufficient for the commission of a formal mortal sin, and therefore remain equivalently infants.

Doubtless the truth lies somewhere between these two extremes; the question of principle is tolerably

[1] See the Summer School book for 1924: *St. Thomas Aquinas* (Heffer, 1925): paper VIII, *Dante, the poet of St. Thomas*, by Edward Bullough, Esq., M.A., Fellow of Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge.

clear, but the question of fact and of percentages baffles us, whether in regard of Baptism of desire or of the limbo of infants. In its modern acute form the problem may be called a more or less new one, hardly touched upon in the text-books, and doubtless it will be the subject of much further discussion before more definite conclusions are reached.

It will be observed that I have spoken of the limbo of *infants*, or of those who are equivalently infants. That men, at all events in any large number, may attain to a full intellectual and moral development, and still not have a choice of supernatural import offered them, for good or evil—that they may commit grave offences against God, or again seek deliberately and earnestly to please Him, but purely and simply as the author of the natural, not of a supernatural order—such a hypothesis is so difficult to reconcile with Catholic tradition that it is best kept out of the discussion, which it could only tend to confuse.

In the case of those who are in any sense Christians, or who have come into contact with Christianity, our only serious interest can be in Baptism of desire; in the case of pagan lands not yet evangelised we may also derive hope from a possible extension of the limbo of infants. The whole question has been too little discussed for absolutely certain and clear-cut conclusions. Nevertheless the danger remains great for those who are outside the Church, great also the hope of those who are inside it; all Scripture and all Tradition bear witness to both, and enkindle thereby our gratitude and zeal. "He that is not with me is against me, and he that gathereth not with me scattereth" (*Mt.* xii, 30: *Lk.* xi, 23). Each in his own measure, it is our duty and privilege to help forward the fulfilment of Our

Lord's final commission to His apostles: "Go ye, therefore, make disciples of all the nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (*Mt.* xxviii, 19).

With regard to bibliography, I think I have sufficiently indicated in the course of the paper the works to which I should attach especial importance. Others are included in the general bibliography at the end.

# V

## CONFIRMATION

By the Right Rev. Mgr. Canon George, D.D., Ph.D.

In the list of sacraments defined by the Council of Trent to be true sacraments instituted by Christ occurs the sacrament of Confirmation (Session 7, canon 1):

> If anyone asserts that the sacraments of the New Law have not all been instituted by Our Lord Jesus Christ, or that they are more or less than seven, *viz.*, Baptism, Confirmation, *etc.*, or further, that any one of them is not truly and properly a sacrament: let him be anathema.

This sacrament is the complement of Baptism in the process of Christian initiation, and hence it occupies the second place in the list of sacraments. As the name implies, it is the sacrament which gives strength; by Baptism we are made children of God, by Confirmation we are strengthened for the warfare which is the lot of the children of God.

All the sacraments from their very nature confer sanctifying grace, and in doing so confer also the fountain of grace, the Blessed Trinity (*cf. Jn.* xiv, 23: "If anyone love me . . . my Father will love him . . . and we will come to him and make our abode with him"). The Holy Spirit therefore is given by all the sacraments.

But the Holy Spirit may be given for many different purposes; He can produce various effects of grace which are not necessarily contained in grace as such. According to Catholic doctrine the special effect of the Holy Spirit in Confirmation is to enable the recipient to profess the faith with conviction and courage, and consequently to give a title to special graces for the attainment of that end.

There are clear indications in the New Testament that Christ not only intended but promised to give his followers the Holy Spirit for this special purpose of strengthening them in the profession of their faith.

*Lk.* xii, 11-12: "When they shall bring you into the synagogues and to magistrates and powers, be not solicitous how or what you shall answer . . . for the Holy Ghost shall teach you in the same hour what you shall say."

*Acts* i, 8: "You shall receive the power of the Holy Ghost coming upon you, and you shall be witnesses unto me . . . even to the uttermost parts of the earth."

This promise of the Holy Spirit was not to be fulfilled until after the departure of Christ Himself: "for as yet the Holy Ghost was not given because Jesus was not yet glorified" (*Jn.* vii, 39); "it is expedient to you that I go, for if I go not the Paraclete will not come to you, but if I go I will send Him to you" (*Jn.* xvi, 7). The first fulfilment took place in the case of the Apostles and others at Pentecost, as we read in *Acts* ii. The Holy Spirit descended upon them with precisely the effect promised by Christ; they lost their former timidity and began to preach the faith openly and boldly. A similar extraordinary gift of the Holy Spirit is recorded in *Acts* x in the case of Cornelius the centurion and his companions, and curiously enough

before Baptism. But whereas these gifts are extra-sacramental and extraordinary, St. Peter reminds the people that the gift of the Holy Spirit was not meant to be extraordinary, but was promised to all the followers of Christ: "Do penance and be baptised everyone of you . . . and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is made to you and to your children, and to all that are far off whomsoever the Lord our God shall call" (*Acts* ii, 39). As the gift of the Holy Spirit was therefore meant to be normal in the Church, there is a presumption that it would be conferred by a sacrament, as was the case with Baptism and the Holy Eucharist and other gifts promised by Christ. And though the Gospels do not record the actual institution of the sacrament of Confirmation by Christ, the above considerations create a presumption that He did institute it.

With these preliminary remarks we proceed to outline the theology of the sacrament of Confirmation under three heads: (i) That Confirmation is a true sacrament instituted by Christ. (ii) The essence of the sacramental rite, *i.e.*, the matter and form of the sacrament. (iii) The minister of the sacrament.

(i) *Institution by Christ.* There are two incidents recorded in the *Acts* which clearly imply that the Church possessed the sacrament of Confirmation from the outset. (*a*) Philip the deacon had converted and baptised the Samaritans. When the Apostles at Jerusalem heard of this they sent Peter and John "who prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Ghost, for as yet He was fallen on none of them, for they had only been baptised. Then they imposed their hands on them and they received the Holy Ghost"

(*Acts* viii, 14-20). (*b*) St. Paul questioned the disciples at Ephesus: "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when ye believed? But they said to him, we did not so much as hear whether there be a Holy Spirit. And he said: in what then were you baptised? [He implied that if they had received Christian baptism they must have heard of the Holy Spirit in the Trinitarian formula.] They said, In John's baptism." St. Paul explained to them the difference between John's baptism and Christian baptism, and then "they were baptised in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had imposed hands on them, the Holy Ghost came upon them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied" (*Acts* xix, 1-6). From these two incidents we conclude that there existed in the earliest Apostolic times a normal rite for conferring the Holy Spirit: normal, because the Apostles treat its administration as a matter of course: distinct from Baptism, in minister—for Philip the deacon could not administer it—in the rite itself, and in its effect. This effect is not indicated with precision, but from the identity of *charismata* it is evidently the same effect as was produced at Pentecost without the sacrament, the *charismata* being as then not the gift but the manifestation of the gift, the gift itself being the Holy Spirit, for the special purpose of courage in professing the faith. This is confirmed by other passages of the Acts in which a courageous profession of faith is expressly indicated as the effect of the gift of the Holy Spirit (*cf. Acts* iv, 31; vi, 5, 8).

Turning now from Scripture to Tradition we find as early as the Fathers of the third century explicit references to Confirmation as a normal rite of the Church, a rite which was the continuation of that administered by the Apostles at Samaria, which by the

imposition of hands conferred the Holy Spirit in a sense in which He was not conferred by Baptism, a rite distinct from and completing the effect of Baptism. The following passages from Tertullian and St. Cyprian sufficiently illustrate the current belief and practice.

Tertullian (*De Baptismo*, cc. 4-8), after describing how the waters of Baptism obtain their sanctifying power from the Holy Spirit, continues :

> "Not that we obtain the Holy Spirit in the waters; but in the water under the influence of the angel we are cleansed and prepared for the Holy Spirit. . . . thereupon the hand is imposed in blessing, calling and inviting the Holy Spirit (*dehinc manus imponitur per benedictionem advocans et invitans Spiritum Sanctum*)."

In *De Resurrectione Carnis*, c. viii, he analyses the Christian initiation into five stages.

> "The flesh is washed in order that the soul may be cleansed; the flesh is anointed that the soul may be consecrated; the flesh is signed that the soul may be fortified; the flesh is shadowed by the imposition of hands that the soul may be illuminated by the Spirit; the flesh is fed with the Body and Blood of Christ that the soul may likewise grow fat on God."

These passages show a clear realisation of the distinction between Baptism and Confirmation; the anointing in the second passage is a ceremony of Baptism as we learn from the *De Baptismo*, quoted above; if the signing is to be taken with the imposition as part of Confirmation, then we conclude that Tertullian realised that Confirmation not only conferred the Holy Spirit, but did so for the precise purpose of fortifying the newly baptised Christian.

St. Cyprian is equally familiar with the sacrament of Confirmation. He regards Confirmation as a continuation of the action of Peter and John at Samaria:

> "and this is still done among us, that those who are baptised in the Church are presented to the prelates of the Church, and by means of our prayers and the imposition of our hands obtain the Holy Ghost, and are perfected with the seal of the Lord" (*Ep.* 73, 9, *ad Jubaianum*).

And he clearly distinguishes between Baptism and Confirmation:

> "moreover a man is not born again by the imposition of hands when he receives the Holy Spirit, but in Baptism, that so being already born he may receive the Holy Spirit. . . . For the Spirit cannot be received without a man being first in existence to receive Him. But the birth of Christians is in Baptism" (*Ep.* 74, 7, *ad Pompeium*).

These ideas were evidently universal in the early Church, for they were not called in question by any heretical body.

Only among the Novatianists does there seem to have been some laxity of practice, due to the laxity of their founder. Eusebius (*H.E.* vi, 43), has preserved a letter of Pope Cornelius which tells how "Novatian became seriously ill, and thinking he was about to die he received Baptism by infusion on his sick-bed. But when he recovered his health he did not receive the other rites which he ought to have received according to the rule of the Church; he was not sealed by the bishop, and not having received that, how has he received the Holy Spirit?" On account of this laxity the Council of

Nicaea in 325 decreed that converts from Novatianism while not to be rebaptised or (if in orders) re-ordained, were to be received with the imposition of hands for the conferring of the Holy Spirit.

It will be noticed that the early Fathers are content with the formula that by the imposition of hands the Holy Spirit is given, without stating the precise effect of this gift. The first adequate expression of this effect is found in an anonymous homily *De Pentecoste*, of the fifth century.

The homily is preserved in *Max. Biblioth. Vet. Patrum*, Vol. vi, p. 649, and contains the following explanation of the effect of Confirmation:

> "*in Baptismo regeneramur ad vitam, post Baptismum confirmamur ad pugnam; in Baptismo abluimur, post Baptismum roboramur . . . Confirmatio armat et instruit ad agones mundi hujus et proelia . . . Per Spiritum Sanctum dono sapientiae spiritualis illuminamur, aedificamur . . . consummamur.*"

This important text was attributed by the author of the forged Decretals to Pope Melchiades (*d.* 314).

Further, the Fathers are unconscious of the difficulty put to St. Jerome of explaining how the gift of the Holy Spirit could be the peculiar effect of Confirmation, seeing that the Holy Spirit was already conferred by Baptism. St. Jerome could only reply that Confirmation did not give the Holy Spirit, but was intended merely to recall the gift of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, and served to enhance the dignity of the Episcopate rather than to meet any want on the part of the recipient (*Dial. advers. Lucifer.*, 7-9).

The first and the only formal definitions concerning the sacrament of Confirmation were formulated

by the Council of Trent in reply to the attacks on this sacrament made by the heretics of the sixteenth century. The definitions are restrained, the Fathers of the Council after much discussion being content to define only those points of doctrine which were actually controverted.

The Council, in Session 7, in treating of the sacraments in general, defines that Confirmation is one of the seven true sacraments instituted by Christ, and that it is one of the three sacraments which confer a character and therefore cannot be repeated. It then formulates three canons dealing solely with Confirmation—

> (I) If anyone says that Confirmation of the baptised is an idle ceremony, and not rather a true sacrament properly so called, or that formerly it was nothing else than a kind of catechesis by which young adults expounded the grounds of their faith before the Church: let him be anathema.
>
> (II) If anyone says that they who attribute some power to the sacred chrism of Confirmation are injurious to the Holy Spirit: let him be anathema.
>
> (III) If anyone says that the ordinary minister of holy Confirmation is not the bishop alone, but any simple priest: let him be anathema.

Before concluding the first part of this paper, a word must be said on the vexed question of the attitude of the early Church to Confirmation conferred by heretics. The validity of heretical Confirmation was involved in the dispute between Rome and Africa on the validity of heretical Baptism. St. Cyprian took the line of Tertullian that all sacraments administered by heretics were invalid; to admit their validity would be

to deny the unity of the Church. Further, he confounded fruitfulness with validity and held that a fruitless sacrament could not be valid.

Pope Stephen decided in favour of the validity of heretical Baptism; his decree survives only in St. Cyprian's version of it (*Ep.* 74, 1), and runs as follows:

> *Si qui ergo a quocunque haeresi veniunt ad vos, nihil innovetur nisi quod traditum est, ut manus illis imponatur in paenitentiam, cum ipsi haeretici proprie alterutrum ad se venientes non baptizent sed communicent tantum.*

St. Cyprian interpreted this decree to mean that persons baptised and confirmed in heresy were not to be baptised, but only confirmed, when they applied for reconciliation. And in reply (*Ep.* 74, 5) he accuses the Pope of inconsistency, for he argues that if heretical Baptism is valid so is heretical Confirmation.

But, it may be urged, the Pope does not mention Confirmation. Apart from the sacrament of Orders there were two impositions in use in the Church; imposition for Penance, and imposition for giving the Holy Spirit; and the Pope expressly speaks of imposition for Penance. Did St. Cyprian misunderstand the Pope's words? Against this conclusion it may be urged (*a*) that St. Cyprian was acquainted with both impositions (*cf. Ep.* 71, 2); (*b*) that the same view of the Pope's meaning was taken by Firmilian and the bishops of Asia Minor (*cf. Ep.* 75), and also by the anonymous author of the treatise *De Rebaptismate* who wrote in support of St. Stephen. Yet as the Pope's decree was sent only to St. Cyprian, the inference would seem to be that he in his haste misunderstood it and passed on his mistake to others.

With regard to the general question as to the atti-

tude of early writers to heretical Confirmation, there seems to be no adequate evidence that they regarded such Confirmation as invalid. It is true that we find a distinction made in the reconciliation of heretics between those who had been Catholics and had lapsed into heresy, and those who had always been heretics and had received only heretical sacraments. In the former case imposition of hands *in paenitentiam* was prescribed; in the latter imposition of hands for imparting the Holy Spirit. But this may be due to the fact that Confirmation was more widely omitted among early heretics than we imagine; we have ample evidence of its omission amongst Novatianists. Further, in speaking of the reconciliation of heretics, the Fathers, even when they mention *impositio ad dandum Spiritum Sanctum*, probably refer not to Confirmation but to Penance as conferring charity, the great gift of the Holy Spirit. In this connexion the words of St. Augustine *Contra Donatistas*, *De Bapt.*, v, 33, cannot be too strongly emphasised:

> *Manus autem impositio si non adhiberetur ab haeresi venienti, tanquam extra omnem culpam esse judicaretur: propter caritatis autem copulationem, quod est maximum donum Spiritus Sancti, sine quo non valent ad salutem quaecunque alia sancta in homine fuerunt, manus haereticis correctis imponitur.*

(ii) *The Rite*: *Matter and Form.* We must distinguish between theory and practice. In practice Confirmation is administered in the Church as follows. (*a*) In the West the bishop, *extensis manibus versus confirmandos*, invokes the descent of the sevenfold Spirit on the *confirmandi*; then with the right thumb he makes the sign

of the Cross with chrism on the forehead of each candidate, saying these words: *Signo te signo Crucis et confirmo te chrismate salutis in nomine Patris et Filii et Spiritus Sancti. Amen.* (*b*) In the East there is no extension of hands, and no invocation of the sevenfold Spirit; the priest anoints the forehead, eyes, nostrils, etc., saying these words: σφραγὶς δωρεᾶς Πνεύματος Ἁγίου. Both these rites are recognised as valid by the Church, and we have therefore an infallible guarantee that both contain all the elements essential for a valid Confirmation. It is to be noted that in practice the anointing must be made with chrism composed of oil of olives and balsam, and not with mere oil; that the chrism must be consecrated by a bishop, even though a priest administer the sacrament; that the anointing must be done with the hand, and never (as occasionally in Extreme Unction) with an instrument; further that there is no imposition of hands in either rite distinct from the anointing.

So much for practice. It does not follow that all these elements are essential for validity. In practice, where validity has to be secured, the Church prescribes the safer course; and even the fact that in case of some omission she orders the missing element to be supplied, or even orders the repetition of the whole rite, does not commit the Church to the assertion that the element in question is speculatively speaking essential (*cf.* St. Alphonsus, *Theol. Moralis*, vi, 751).

We come then to the speculative question: What are the essential elements, the matter and form of the sacrament of Confirmation? Theologians differ widely as to the answer. It will be remembered that in the quotations from the *Acts* and from the African writers given in the first part of this paper, imposition

of hands alone is mentioned in the rite of Confirmation; later, certainly from the fourth century, we find anointing with chrism in use; finally in the modern rite there is no imposition of hands apart from the anointing. What then is the essential matter of Confirmation? Is it imposition of hands, or anointing with chrism, or both imposition and anointing?

The solution of this problem has been retarded by two facts which need to be noted. The first is the late development of the theology of the sacraments, and the fact that when the development took place in the time of the Schoolmen they were handicapped by the use of authorities which proved later to be forgeries. Thus St. Thomas devotes *Pars* iii, q.72, of the *Summa* to the sacrament of Confirmation. He relies largely however on certain letters which bear the names of early Popes but which in fact were pseudo-Isidorian forgeries of the ninth century; also on the works of pseudo-Dionysius, whom he identified with Denis the Areopagite, a disciple of St. Paul and therefore of first-rate authority. But the so-called works of Dionysius are a forgery of the sixth century. It is difficult to estimate how far the Schoolmen were misled by these forgeries; we can only speculate as to what views they would have held.

The second fact is the exaggerated importance attached to the *Decretum pro Armenis* of 1439. This document until quite recent times was regarded as an infallible pronouncement of the Council of Florence (*e.g.*, by Card. Billot, *De Sacram.* II, pp. 294 *seqq.*), and as such has had the greatest influence on the judgment of theologians. Of late however, and notably by Cardinal Van Rossum, in *De Essent. Sacr. Ordinis*, it has been shown to be to a large extent an *opusculum* of St.

Thomas, issued by the Council with notable modifications, and bearing internal evidence that it claims little dogmatic importance. The effect of this document on the theology of the sacraments may be estimated by its reference to Confirmation: *Secundum sacramentum est Confirmatio, cujus materia est chrisma confectum ex oleo . . . et balsamo . . . per episcopum benedicto.* After narrating how the Apostles gave Confirmation by imposition of hands, it continues: *loco autem illius manus impositionis datur in Ecclesia Confirmatio.*

The Church in fact has issued no formal definition with regard to the matter of Confirmation; the Council of Trent declined to define. Hence the various solutions of the problem put forward by theologians must be examined on their merits, and it is important to estimate the value of the arguments used.

What is the value of the argument from silence? The anointing is not mentioned in the *Acts* nor in the early Fathers; are we justified in concluding therefore that the Apostles in confirming did not use chrism?

St. Thomas (*Sum. Theol.* iii, q.72, a.4, *ad* 1), urges that the Apostles used many things in conferring the sacraments which are not recorded in Scripture but taught by Tradition. This seems an apposite remark.

If anointing was not used by the apostles but was introduced, say, in the fourth century, are we justified in concluding that therefore it cannot be essential to the sacrament but is merely a supplementary ceremony like the anointings in Baptism, and the tradition of instruments in Holy Orders?

It is often urged by theologians that when the Council of Trent (Session 21, chap. 2) in reference to Communion under one kind declared that the Church had the power to make minor changes in the sacraments *salva*

*eorum substantia*, the Council intended by this clause to define that the Church had no power to change the substance of a sacrament. But the history of the Council is opposed to this view; we may also say that it is extremely unlikely that the Council would make such an important pronouncement in a parenthesis. The words *salva eorum substantia* must be taken as a *reservation*, in the sense that the Council was dealing exclusively with a point which was accidental, and wished to disclaim any intention of pronouncing on the power of the Church to modify the substance of the sacraments. That the Church cannot modify the substance of the sacraments is an obvious conclusion from the doctrine of divine institution; for surely, if only Christ can institute sacraments, they must remain substantially as He instituted them.

This leads to the question: What is substantial in any sacramental rite? Many theologians argue as follows. A sacrament is a symbolic rite instituted by Christ, and that alone is substantial in the rite which was instituted by Christ. But while in the case of two sacraments, Baptism and the Holy Eucharist, Christ instituted the matter of the sacraments *in specie* so that they can never be changed, in the case of the other sacraments He instituted the matter only *in genere*. That is to say, He decreed, for example, in Confirmation that a rite should be chosen which had a natural aptitude to express the giving of the Holy Spirit, but He left the choice of the particular rite to the Church. Hence it is the significance of the rite which was fixed by Christ and is essential; the precise rite to be used was not essential, and being fixed by the Church could be altered by her at pleasure; she could add, subtract, substitute as she willed. The symbolic rite was a lan-

guage and might vary without detriment to the sacrament, just as the sacrament was valid whether one spoke in (say) English or French (*Cf.* Billot, *De Sacram.* I, 35). This theory of institution *in genere* was invented to meet the demands of positive theology, which professed to produce historic evidence of substantial changes in sacramental rites: obviously it cannot be proved. It is true that the sacramental rites are described in the Gospels only in the case of two sacraments, Baptism and the Holy Eucharist; but the silence of the Gospels is no proof that Christ did not fix the essential elements of the other five sacraments *in specie;* and in the case of Confirmation the fact that we find it normally in use in the *Acts* argues, as has been already pointed out, its specific institution by Christ. And surely there is a presumption that Christ is the author of all the sacraments in the same sense; if He instituted seven sacraments, presumably He instituted them all *in specie.* The theory of institution *in genere* is simply a *deus ex machina* which can be justified only on the plea that it is the only theory which will fit the facts.

Looking back on the three views as to the essential matter of Confirmation suggested above we find that the first view, that imposition of hands is the sole matter, has the advantage of being in harmony with the *Acts.* Unfortunately it has little support from theologians.

The second view, that anointing is the sole matter, relies on the statement of the *Decretum pro Armenis* that anointing was substituted by the Church for the original imposition of hands; and on the assumption that there is no real imposition in the modern rite. But this is false; the Church has always insisted on the application of the chrism by the hand, to the exclusion of an

instrument, precisely to retain the imposition. Moreover this view requires the theory of institution *in genere*.

The third view, that both imposition and anointing are essential, presupposes either that the Apostles used anointing, or that the Church introduced it and made it essential.

With regard to the form, there can be no difficulty unless one takes an extremely metaphysical view. The terms *matter* and *form* were applied to sacraments by analogy with the constituents of ordinary bodies, which are composed of *materia prima* and *forma substantialis*. The terms are useful, if only it is remembered that they are analogical, and the analogy must not be pushed too far. By form in the sacraments we merely indicate the words used in the rite, and they are adequate as long as, in union with the matter, they express the correct significance. They may be long or short, indicative or imperative or deprecatory.

(iii) *The Minister*. In the *Acts* Confirmation is administered only by Apostles, and from the incident in *Acts* viii we may conclude that a deacon could not confirm. In the early Church for the first three centuries both in East and West Confirmation was administered only by bishops. The bishop presided at the solemn service of initiation; after the priest had baptised it was the bishop who confirmed, said Mass, and gave Communion to the initiated. St. Cyprian (*Ep.* 73) for the West, Firmilian (*Ep.* 75) for the East, both testify that the bishop is the sole minister of Confirmation, and the Council of Elvira in 306 orders those who have received clinical Baptism to be taken to the bishop when they recover, for Confirmation.

A change occurred probably about the end of the

fourth century, when the multiplication of small parishes put an end to the solemn rite of initiation. Baptism was still performed by the priest, and in the East the priest also confirmed immediately after Baptism, a custom which still survives; in the West, however, Confirmation was reserved to the bishop.

The West has always resisted the claim of priests to confirm, though such claims have frequently been made. (*a*) The Council of Toledo in 400 forbade priests to consecrate chrism, but allowed them to confirm in the absence of a bishop. However, the Council of Seville in 619 forbade priests to confirm, quoting Innocent I, "*quia pontificatus apicem non habent*" (C.7). (*b*) Innocent I (401-417) wrote to Decentius, bishop of Gubbio, where priests were claiming to confirm:—"*De consignandis infantibus manifestum est non ab alio quam ab episcopo fieri licere* (*nam presbyteri, licet secundi sint sacerdotes, pontificatus tamen apicem non habent*), *hoc autem pontificium solis deberi episcopis ut vel consignent vel Paracletum Spiritum tradant.*" In support of his statement he appeals to *Acts* viii and ecclesiastical custom. (*c*) Pope Gelasius (492-496) rebuked the priests of Lucania, who claimed to administer Confirmation, for going beyond their sphere and daring to usurp "*debita episcopali fastigio.*" (*d*) St. Gregory the Great heard that priests in Sardinia were administering Confirmation; he wrote in 593 to Januarius, bishop of Cagliari: "*presbyteri baptizatos infantes signare sacro in fronte chrismate non praesumant.*" But as this letter was badly received by the priests in question he wrote again to Januarius in 594, making a compromise: "*Nos quidem secundum usum veterum Ecclesiae nostrae fecimus. Sed si omnino hac de re aliqui contristantur, ubi episcopi desunt, ut presbyteri etiam in frontibus baptizatos tangere debeant concedimus.*"

So far no reason has been given for limiting Confirmation to bishops except that only Apostles confirmed in the *Acts*, and ecclesiastical custom. In fact Ratramnus, a monk of Corby, when commissioned by Nicholas I (858-867) to reply to the Greeks, who urged that from time immemorial Confirmation had been administered among them by simple priests, could only refer them to the *Acts*, to Innocent I, and to the custom of the West.

Further it has not yet been suggested that Confirmation by a priest would be invalid. This statement was first made in the ninth century by pseudo-Isidore, in a letter fraudulently attributed to Pope Eusebius:

> *Manus impositionis sacramentum magna veneratione tenendum est, quod ab aliis perfici non potest nisi a summis pontificibus. Nec tempore apostolorum ab aliis quam ab ipsis apostolis legitur aut scitur peractum esse, neque ab aliis quam ab illis qui eorum locum tenent unquam perfici potest aut fieri debet. Nam si aliter praesumtum fuerit irritum habeatur et vacuum, nec inter ecclesiastica unquam reputabitur sacramenta.*

These words of pseudo-Eusebius go too far, and seem to imply that a simple priest could not even be commissioned to confirm. Certainly this view was held by many of the Schoolmen and survived even the Council of Trent. It would be interesting to know how far they influenced subsequent thought. St. Thomas makes Eusebius the basis of his article on the minister of Confirmation (q.72, a.11). He also quotes Gregory's letter to Januarius, and explains that the Pope has the fulness of authority in the Church, and so can grant a priest power to confirm, just as he can give him power

to give minor orders. But it is at least doubtful whether minor orders are sacraments.

The *Decretum pro Armenis* of 1439 is content to say "*ordinarius minister est episcopus*," and it adds that simple priests have sometimes confirmed "*per Apostolicae Sedis dispensationem.*" The Council of Trent had to condemn the Reformers who maintained that any priest could confirm; but such was the variety of opinion among the Fathers that they merely re-echoed the *Decretum pro Armenis:*

> *Si quis dixerit sanctae confirmationis ordinarium ministrum non esse solum episcopum sed quemvis simplicem sacerdotem*: A.S. (Session 7, c.3).

They say nothing about the origin or nature of the power, and a later decree does not take us any further:

> *Si quis dixerit episcopos non esse presbyteris superiores vel non habere potestatem confirmandi et ordinandi, vel eam quam habent illis esse cum presbyteris communem*: A.S. (Session 23, c.7).

Modern theologians all teach that a priest cannot confirm validly without a commission from the Holy See. Benedict XIV supplies two clear statements:

> *Episcopi Latini infantes seu alios in suis diocesibus baptizatos a presbyteris graecis absolute chrismate in fronte consignatos confirment, cum neque per praedecessores nostros neque per Nos graecis presbyteris in Italia et insulis adjacentibus ut infantibus baptizatis sacramentum confirmationis conferant facultas concessa sit aut concedatur* (Constitution for the Italian Greeks).

*Ceterum quidquid sit de hac difficili et valde implexa controversia, omnibus in confesso est irritam nunc fore confirmationem a simplici presbytero latino ex sola episcopi delegatione collatam, quia Sedes Apostolica id juris sibi unice reservavit* (*De Synodo Diocesano;* D. 1458 N).

Pius X in 1910 (on Greek errors) adds "*haud minus absonum est validam habendam esse confirmationem a quovis presbytero collatam.*"

*The Problem*: Confirmation is not a juridical sacrament like Penance; it is a consecration the power to confer which is given by a sacramental character. If then a priest requires a papal delegation before he can validly confirm, his priestly character must be limited by divine law with regard to Confirmation: *Character presbyteralis est de jure divino potestas ad confirmandum non absolute sed sub conditione commissionis acceptae ab eo qui in Ecclesia praeest*" (Billot, *De Sacram.* I, p. 288). Similarly, as Greek priests have no more divine power than Latin priests, a papal commission must be presumed in their case—a tacit one implied in the fact of papal recognition of priestly Confirmation in the East.

If it is further asked what is the nature of the power received by a priest from the papal commission to confirm, and how a commission can combine with the priestly character to confer the consecration known as confirmation, we can only reply with Benedict, "it is a difficult and very much involved problem."

# VI

## PENANCE

By the Right Rev. Abbot Cabrol, O.S.B., O.B.E.

In the division of the sacraments between the papers of the Summer School, I was assigned the task of explaining the Sacrament of Penance. This subject, therefore, I did not choose. If I had had my choice, certainly it is not the subject I would have taken. They tried to comfort me by saying that this sacrament is the most difficult to explain, that perhaps it is the most important for ordinary Christians, and probably the one they need the most in ordinary life; finally, that this sacrament having been probably the most studied and discussed the subject is nowadays one of the most interesting. After such insistence I feel it would be ungraceful to complain. I have no right to do so. I will try, therefore, to treat my subject as best I can.

First of all, let us observe that the idea of penance is not a notion that exclusively belongs to Christianity. The notion of sin has been common to most peoples, involving naturally the idea of ransom and redemption. That is why nearly all ancient religions—even among savages—proposed to their followers various means to atone for their sins. Let it suffice here to mention the rites in the sacrifices of Mithras, Isis, and many others, which were all penitential rites for the salvation, purification, and redemption of souls. I shall not

waste your time in describing these rites. I mention them only to draw two conclusions.

The first is that in this question (of reparation) as in many other points, Christianity satisfies a want of the human soul; also that there exists a wonderful harmony between the aspirations of that soul created by God and the remedies placed at our disposal by Christ, God's messenger, for our salvation and sanctification. This faculty of the human soul for adapting itself to the means of salvation—or, if I may use a theological expression, this *obediential* or submissive *faculty* of our soul—contains in itself an apologetic value which, in our present time, may have perhaps been exaggerated, but which must not be entirely disregarded.

My second conclusion concerns what I may call the transcendency of Christianity over all other religions. If, for instance, we compare the simple, austere dignity of our penitential rites with the ceremonial in use in any pagan religion, as the purification by the blood of a bull in the cult of Mithras, we immediately see how far superior Christianity stands. This apologetic aspect in the history of religions must not be dwelt upon here; my object to-day is not to consider penance as a constitutive element of nearly all religions. I am not even expected to study penance as a supernatural virtue, but solely as a sacrament. The subject is therefore clearly defined. Penance as here considered is a sacrament of the New Law whereby, under certain conditions, the sins committed by a Christian after Baptism are forgiven.

I have to study first both the existence and the working of the Sacrament of Penance during the early centuries. Later we shall study with more details the penitent's part in the sacrament (contrition, con-

fession, satisfaction), and the priest's part (absolution).

All questions relating to the Sacrament of Penance have been earnestly studied in England, France and Germany, by such men as Lea, Hogan, Casey, Swete, Batiffol, Vacandard, Boudinhon, d'Alès, Galtier, Rauschen, Brewer, Preuschen. Their names may not be unfamiliar to you.

## I: EXISTENCE OF THE SACRAMENT.

(i) *While among men, Christ Himself forgave sins.* This fact does not surprise us; forgiveness of sins was one of the characteristics predicted of Him—at least implicitly—by the Prophets in the Old Testament. The Messias who was to come would be the Saviour, the Redeemer, a fountain for the washing of sinners (*Zach.* xiii). He would come that "sin may have an end" (*Dan.* ix, 24); he would be the prince of a new kingdom, and the maker of a *palingenesis*, a new world. And John the Baptist seeing Him coming exclaimed "Behold, the Lamb of God who taketh away the sins of the world" (*Jn.* i, 29). *Cf.* also *Mt.* i, 21 "For he shall save his people from their sins": and *Lk.* i, 77 "To give knowledge of salvation to his people unto the remission of their sins."

And, in the *Apocalypse*, John describes Him as "having the keys of death and of hell"; as the one "that hath the key of David, he that openeth and no man shutteth, shutteth and no man openeth" (*Apoc.* i, 17-18; iii, 7). And what the Prophets announced concerning the Messias was realized by Jesus Christ during His life. One day they brought to Him "a man sick of the palsy

lying in a bed." Jesus said to him "Be of good heart Son, thy sins are forgiven thee." The scribes murmured. "He blasphemeth . . . who can forgive sins, but God only?" But Jesus answered "Whether is easier, to say, Thy sins are forgiven thee, or to say, Arise and walk? But that you may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins—then said He to the man sick of the palsy, Arise, take up thy bed and go into thy house." This fact is related in almost exactly the same terms in *Mt.* ix, 2-8; *Mk.* ii, 3; *Lk.* v, 18. Nothing could be more obvious: the Son of man has the power to remit sins, a power which belongs to God alone, just as He has power to give orders to nature; and, that nobody may have any doubt, by a word of His mouth He heals the man sick of the palsy.

This fact, related by each one of the three synoptists, would be sufficient to show that Jesus claimed for Himself and exercised the power of remitting sins. But it is not the only one; for instance, in the house of Simon the Pharisee, He absolved the penitent woman, saying "Thy sins are forgiven thee" (*Lk.* vii, 48) and, as they that sat at meat were wondering who He was "that forgiveth sins" He said to the woman, "Thy faith hath made thee safe; go in peace."

In addition to those passages, the parables of the lost groat, of the lost sheep taken back to the fold by the Good Shepherd, of the prodigal son, could be quoted. All of them show that Our Lord, as He Himself said, had come to save sinners, consequently to remit their sins and reconcile them to God. The first point being now established let us come to the second one.

(ii) *This power of remitting sins has been given by Christ to His Church.* If no text could be found in the New

Testament to prove this second point, I could still say—and we should all agree in the matter—that the very fact of the foundation of the Church necessarily leads us to draw that conclusion. Once admitted that Our Lord established His Church for the continuation of His work on earth, to save and sanctify men, as He Himself did during His mortal life, we must accept as a consequence that He gave to His Church the power of remitting sins.

The existence of the Church was demonstrated here, at the Summer School, in the papers of 1927; I have not to enter into that question again. But we could arrive at the same conclusion through another form of argument; the power of forgiving sins committed after Baptism is just as necessary to the Church as the power of saving men by baptismal regeneration. Supposing that the Church had not been granted that power, then she would not be the Church as planned and established by Christ. She would then be a society of the elect, a sort of little cenacle of holy innocent souls, such as was dreamt of by some heretics; but she would not be the Church universal and Catholic, as pictured by Our Lord in the parable of the cockle, for instance (*Mt.* xiii, 24-30; 36-43), or in the parable of the net cast into the sea, "and gathering together of all kind of fishes," good and bad (*Mt.* xiii, 47-50). If one of the elect happened to fall into sin—and how could it not happen?—then he would be lost, entirely given up to despair and damnation. But that sort of situation is impossible, it is in no way in keeping with God's great goodness—with the tender mercy of Christ, who during His life showed Himself so indulgent, so merciful towards sinners. And supposing that Our Blessed Lord had not instituted the Sacrament of

Penance, can you imagine what the result would have been? Certainly men would have found a way of evading the difficulty—just as they did in the fourth century, when some catechumens (Constantine was one of them) postponed their baptism until the end of their lives, relying on that sort of general absolution to live and enjoy in the meantime an easy life—and the Church of God would have consisted mainly of catechumens, and Our Lord's expectations would have been completely disappointed.

Perhaps you will say that those are *a priori* reasons. Still they really have a great intrinsic value. When studying one or another point of Catholic doctrine, we must never forget that the Church is a whole, harmonious, complete organism. The Divine Word by whom the world has been created "in measure and number, and weight" (*Wisdom* xi, 21), did not show less wisdom in creating His Church. Moreover these arguments, whatever their value may be, are not the only ones. We have the testimony of Our Lord Himself, who explicitly and very clearly declared that He gave His Church the power of remitting sins. Omitting other references of the Gospel, not so precise or clear, we can reduce our texts to three. The first is the promise made to St. Peter (*Mt.* xvi, 17-19); the second contains the same promise given this time not to Peter, but to all the Apostles (*Mt.* xviii, 18); finally, after the Resurrection, the promise is actually carried out and the authority to remit sins is conferred on the Apostles (*Jn.* xx, 21-23).

The meaning of these three texts is so precise and obvious that there is no reason, it seems to me, to discuss them in full. I do not mean to say that no attempt has been made to lessen their value, to cavil

at the exact bearing of each one of the words. If we know critics and commentators, we shall not expect them to agree upon this more than upon any other point of interpretation. I do not mean to say either that that discussion seems to me entirely useless. But it would require several lectures. I cannot do better, then, than to refer those of you who would like to study those texts very closely to the writers quoted in the bibliography, and to the more recent theologians and commentators who have discussed them, especially Père Lagrange. For us here it will be enough to draw the following conclusions.

From His very words it is clear that Christ gave to Peter first, and afterwards to all His Apostles, the same power that He exercised Himself during His life, namely the power of remitting sins. The metaphor of binding and loosing signifies, in the language used by the Rabbis at the time of Our Lord, binding or loosing consciences; it means to allow or to prohibit, to absolve or to sentence somebody. The metaphor of the keys, very much in use in the Bible, signifies opening or shutting at will. The keys are the sign of power. Only the master of the house keeps the keys. Here the keys signify the spiritual power through which the gates of heaven are opened or shut (d'Alès, *Dict. Apol.*, c.1758). Finally, after His resurrection, without any metaphor, Our Lord simply and purely gave to His Apostles authority to remit or to retain sins.

(iii) *How did the Church understand and exercise that power?* We shall only examine the use of that power during the first centuries, because it is during that period that the references to it are most obscure. That does not mean that during the Middle Ages references

to the power of the keys can be explained without difficulty, but that from the fourth century onwards the references in the Fathers are more numerous, clearer and more precise; moreover, I cannot give here the whole history of the Sacrament of Penance.

Let us begin with the Apostles. *St. Peter* passed judgment on Ananias and Saphira, who had lied to the Holy Ghost (*Acts* v, 1-11). He rebukes Simon the Magician for offering him money to buy the power of giving the Holy Ghost (*Acts* viii, 9-24). *St. Paul* excommunicates the incestuous man at Corinth, and after his penance admits him again into the membership of the Church (*I Cor.* v, 1-13; *II Cor.* xi, 5-11; v, 18-20). *St. Paul* also punishes Hymenaeus and Alexander whom he says, "I have delivered to Satan that they may learn not to blaspheme" (*I Tim.* i, 20), and in this same letter he orders Timothy to reprove before all "them that sin" (*I Tim.* v, 20), while his words: "Impose not hands lightly upon any man" (*I Tim.* v, 22) according to many commentators, refer to penance. *St. James* (iv, 8) orders sinners "to cleanse their hands and purify their hearts." *St. John* makes some references to penance in the *Apocalypse*, and we know the story—related by Clement of Alexandria—of the murderer converted by *St. John* and readmitted into the Church.

After the Apostles, a second period in the history of the Sacrament of Penance begins. It includes the second century, or, to be more exact, it extends from the last years of the first century to the end of the second. The chief and best known witness in this period is Hermas, the writer of the book called *The Shepherd*. The book seems to have been written for the comfort of sinners, to show that they must not despair, and that repentance is open to them. It is—as it has been said

in a broad sense—a kind of treatise on Penance, the first Christian one ever written. Hermas unfortunately is obscure, and seems sometimes to contradict himself, so much so that certain critics think that his testimony has been revised and even interpolated; the form is certainly obscure and allegorical. The Church is depicted as a great tower built of square stones which are the faithful; the angels are the builders; the stones which are found worthy are placed in the building, the others rejected.

Hermas has a theory of his own concerning Penance. In his time there existed a sect or school, the Encratite School (from the Greek ἐγκρατής, continent), who did not accept the existence of Penance after Baptism. Was Hermas influenced by the sect? To some extent, perhaps; still, he himself admits the idea of Penance, as the object of his book is to exhort sinners to repentance, the repentance preached by his Shepherd to those who have fallen into a mortal sin after Baptism. Nevertheless in the opinion of Hermas, according to some critics, Penance is granted only once to the sinner, who if he falls again has no other opportunity to be forgiven; Penance is like a Jubilee which cannot be repeated.

This interpretation is not accepted by Père d'Alès.[1] Hermas, he thinks, wants to teach sinners that they ought not, so to speak, to play with God's mercy by giving themselves up to sin in the certainty that they can always be forgiven; but he never clearly holds that repentance and forgiveness are granted only once after Baptism.

As has already been said, the testimony of Hermas

[1] See d'Alès, *Edit de Calliste*, pp. 54-67; also *Dict. d'Apol.*, Art. *Pénitence*, col. 1764-1771.

concerning Penance in the second century, though much quoted, has been variously interpreted. He is not after all, let us remember, the only witness of that time; and, if his testimony is rather obscure, the light thrown on the question by contemporary writers will help in the correct interpretation of his *Shepherd*. Clement, bishop of Rome, Ignatius, Polycarp, the Second Clementine *Epistle to the Corinthians*, Justin, Theophilus of Antioch, Irenæus especially—all of them exhort sinners to do Penance and to hope for salvation.[1]

In the third century, the doctrine of the sacrament of Penance came, so to speak, to a crisis. The Montanists, already active in the second century, made their own the theory of the Encratites, giving it a new form. The Church, according to the new theory, only consists of pure, holy, souls. Penance must be refused to sinners guilty of the three capital sins, impurity (adultery and fornication), apostasy, and idolatry, the three great "reserved" sins. Tertullian and Hippolytus, two great doctors of the time, allowed themselves to follow that rigorist doctrine, and bitterly attacked Pope St. Callistus, who readmitted into the Church sinners who had committed adultery and fornication. Novatian, using still greater violence, formed a rigorist party who refused reconciliation to the *lapsi* and to the apostates.

The other Catholic doctors of the third century (Zephyrine, Callistus, Cyprian, Dionysius of Corinth, even Origen—despite a disputed passage in his *De Oratione*—and other doctors) do not show such a stern severity as Hippolytus and Tertullian. According to their teachings, all sins are submitted to the power of the

[1] *Cf.* texts collected by d'Alès in *Dict. Apol.*, col. 1772.

keys.[1] It would be too long to quote all these texts. But the few following remarks on public and private Penance during these first centuries will help us to get a clearer idea of this matter.

(iv) *Private and public Penance during the first centuries.* Public Penance in the fourth century was a semi-liturgical and semi-social institution, organized in a rather complicated manner. Many communities divided the penitents into four classes or degrees.

The first class or degree consisted of those sentenced to the most severe penance. They could not participate in any liturgical function and had to put on mourning dress. They were called *flentes* or *mourners*, and were not allowed to attend Divine Service, but stood in the *atrium* outside the church door. The duration of their penance lasted twenty, fifteen, perhaps two years, according to the degree of their guilt. They were great sinners, guilty of homicide, apostasy or adultery.

The second class was that of the *audientes* or *hearers*, so called because, unlike the "mourners," they were allowed to take their places in the porch or narthex of the church, where they could hear the reading of the Scripture or the bishop's homily; but they could not partake in any prayers or receive the imposition of the hands of the bishop like the penitents of the third class. In the porch, behind the catechumens, stood also the heretics and the pagans who wanted to attend Divine Service.

The third class consisted of the *substrati* or *kneelers*. These were admitted inside the church, behind the faithful. They were allowed to take part in Divine Service and to receive the imposition of the bishop's

[1] *Cf.* d'Alès, *loc. cit.*, col. 1783.

hands. They were called "kneelers" because when the faithful prayed standing on Sundays and in Easter Time, they had to remain kneeling. After the prayer for the catechumens there was another prayer for the penitents, after which they were dismissed, as they could not be present at the Mass of the Faithful that began with the Prayer for the Faithful (*Cf. Const. Apost.* viii, 8-9). The penitents in this class were dressed in sackcloth; men had their hair cut, women wore a veil upon their faces. Their penitential exercises were public confession, prostration, fasting, and other practices of mortification.

Finally, the fourth class consisted of the *consistentes* or *bystanders*, so called because they were not excluded from Divine Service but were allowed to be present during the whole of the Mass, but not to participate in the Offertory or receive Holy Communion. No special place in the Church was assigned to them: they mixed with the faithful. Those guilty of the gravest sins or crimes had to pass or to ascend, so to speak, through all these four degrees. The others—sinners guilty of minor faults—were classed either in the second, or third, or even fourth "station."

On principle, the administration of Penance was reserved to the bishop. In some communities, however, like Constantinople, the duties of the bishop in that respect were specially intrusted to one particular priest, known as the "penitentiary."

The reconciliation of the penitents took place on Maundy Thursday with a special ceremonial that you can still read in the *Pontifical*. This is one of the rare remnants of that ancient penitential discipline which is now nearly totally abolished in the Church. Another remnant is the rite of Ash Wednesday, formerly reserved

to the penitents, and later on extended to all the faithful. Lent was the liturgical season particularly reserved to penitents, who, during these forty days, used to prepare for the solemn reconciliation on Maundy Thursday. This is one of the reasons why so many passages in the Lenten lessons and formulas allude to penance and reconciliation of sinners. These penitential exercises were in use during the fourth and the following centuries, but they varied greatly in different provinces. The four degrees or "stations" existed in the East, most probably in all churches, but they were not in use in the Latin Church.[1]

Before the fourth century, public Penance was not so strictly and systematically organised. The classification into four degrees or "stations" was not yet established, but its main outlines were already appearing. The penitents formed a special class, like the catechumens; they were excluded from the reception of the sacraments, principally from Holy Communion; they had to observe special penitential practices.

Besides public Penance, during the early centuries did private Penance exist as well? On this point even Catholic writers do not agree. Some of them (Batiffol, Boudinhon, Vacandard, Hogan), hold that public Penance was the only form that existed, at least the only one whose existence can be proved by sufficiently clear texts. Others, like d'Alès and Galtier, affirm, on the contrary, that besides public Penance, the existence of private Penance during the early centuries can be proved. The former writers, Batiffol especially, call our attention to the fact that public Penance contained in itself all the essentials of the sacrament, contrition,

[1] *Cf.* Funk, *Theol. Quartalschrift*, 1886, pp. 373 *sqq.*

confession, satisfaction, which are the acts of the penitent, and absolution which is the act of the priest.

This will have to be explained more fully below, but we must say at once that public Penance presupposes (*a*) contrition, intense contrition (indeed, what meant those loud lamentations and supplications of the sinner, those long and most severe humiliations, if not the outward expression of the inward sorrow, of the firm purpose of amendment which are the elements of real contrition?); (*b*) the confession or avowal of sins to the bishop, who, therefore, was able to estimate to what degree of penance the sinner had to be submitted; (*c*) the satisfaction, or *exomologesis* as it was called, consisting of that fasting, and those long ordeals which lasted for years, sometimes even for life; (*d*) finally the reconciliation effected by sentence of the bishop or of the priest, who judged that the satisfaction had been sufficient.

The question, therefore, as to the existence of private Penance, appears to be solved, at least implicitly, by the fact of the existence of public Penance. If we concede that the bishop or the priest had to decide on the manner of the penance and the measure of the satisfaction, we must allow that they had to receive the avowal of the guilt, and give the absolution; but that is a question which will be fully studied below.

## II: ACTS OF THE PENITENT: ACT OF THE PRIEST

In the first part of this paper we have shown that Christ during His life exercised the power of forgiving sins, and that He confided this power to His Church;

and we saw how she exercised it during the first centuries. In the second part we are going to study different aspects of the sacrament of Penance; we are going to analyse its elements. Penance, we said, includes the acts of the penitent—contrition, confession, satisfaction—and the act of the priest, absolution; the acts of the penitent are generally considered as the *matter*, the absolution being the *form*.

(i) *Contrition*. It must be remembered that Penance is not only a sacrament but also a virtue; that it is, in fact, the only sacrament which has this double character. The whole of the first part of a treatise on Penance is usually devoted to proving that Penance is a virtue, that it is necessary for the remission of sins; that sin is an offence against God, and that it cannot be forgiven unless the sinner repents and is sorry for his fault.

Numerous texts from the Old Testament and from the New prove this. In the Old Testament there is hardly a sentiment more profoundly felt and expressed than that of sorrow at the memory of sin committed. You remember the sorrow of David and his repentance: "A contrite and humble heart, O God, thou will not despise" (*Ps.* l, 19). *Contrition*, from *conterere*, means broken, crushed (by sorrow). This psalm is one of the prayers that best renders the feeling of contrition. Along with it the Church has chosen six others which form a small collection that has enjoyed the greatest favour in the Church under the title of the *Seven Penitential Psalms*. In the New Testament the contrition of St. Peter and that of St. Mary Magdalen are well known. The writers we have quoted, Hermas, Justin, Tertullian, Cyprian, insist on the necessity of contrition (Galtier, *De Paen.* pp. 30-82; 243-309). The study of

Penance in ancient times reveals the penitent covered with ashes, clad in a hair shirt, giving every external sign of the deepest contrition. If to-day contrition is not expressed, usually at least, under such visible forms, we can still say that the Church demands it with no less energy in her teaching, and that there is not a saint whose life does not furnish eloquent examples of a most lively contrition at the memory of sins committed.

In the first part of a treatise on Penance, theologians discuss what is the nature of this contrition; what contrition is necessary for forgiveness; in what perfect contrition and imperfect contrition (attrition) consists. We need not enter into this discussion; let us content ourselves with saying that if the sinner remains attached to his sin, if he refuses to repent, then there is neither Penance, nor sacrament.

(ii) *Confession.* This has assumed so much importance to-day as an element of Penance that in popular diction the sacrament is called Confession—we say we are going to confession, meaning that we are going to receive the Sacrament of Penance.

We Catholics know the qualities that confession must possess: it must be humble, simple, prudent and entire. This is easily understood, because the avowal of faults—a clear and complete confession—is required by the power of the keys. He who is able to remit the sins in the name of God can do so only on condition that he knows their number and their gravity. In the tribunal of Penance the priest is judge and doctor; he cannot exercise either function unless he knows the state of the sick man or of the offender, and this he can know only by confession. All this is well known by

every Catholic. But for non-Catholics this manner of speaking and of looking at matters may give rise to frequent confusion. They imagine that for Catholics confession is the whole of the sacrament of Penance, and because in the ancient Penance this avowal of faults, as we have described it, is not the most apparent element, they draw false conclusions against the Catholic faith. In point of fact the word *confession* is the translation of the famous *exomologesis* (ἐξομολόγησις), a word whose meaning was much less precise in ancient times. In the language of the Old Testament it means glorifying and giving thanks to God (for instance, Our Lord himself: "I confess to thee, O Father," *Confiteor tibi, Pater,* Πάτερ, ἐξομολογοῦμαί σοι, *Mt.* ix, 25). In the language of primitive Christianity the *exomologesis* is sometimes the whole of Penance, sometimes the satisfaction or another element of Penance, and sometimes more especially the confession of faults. You understand what confusion arises if the word is not studied in its context and translated with precision. We see it used in certain cases to signify not the sacramental confession but merely an exercise of Penance or asceticism.

The confession of sins existed among the Jews in the Old Testament; it is supposed and even explicitly required for certain offences.[1] We shall only quote the well-known text of St. John the Baptist "and [the Jews coming down from Jerusalem and all Judæa] were baptized by him in the Jordan, confessing their sins" (*Mt.* iii, 6, *Mk.* i, 5). Among the Christians, too, in certain cases, there are instances of a confession of sins

[1] *Lev.* iv, 22, 27; xi, 13-15; 28-30; iii, 5; v, 14-19; *Num.* v, 2. *Cf. Dict. Théol. Cath.* III, c.838 (*Confession*); Galtier, *De Paenit.* p. 221; *Dict. Apol.* c. 1795 (*Pénitence*).

which is an exercise of penance, but *not* the sacramental confession, and for certain interpreters the two texts from the *Epistle* of St. James and from the *Didache*, which we shall quote presently, are of this nature. Numerous examples of this non-sacramental confession exist, above all in monasteries, where it was much employed. We shall cite only St. Benedict, who in his rule (Chs. IV and VII) twice alludes to a non-sacramental confession, made to the seniors or to the abbot, who were not priests.

A parenthesis should be opened here and certain facts cited from the Middle Ages, where we see sinners before dying, not able to find a priest, confessing either to a deacon or even to a layman. The point has been studied recently in a learned thesis by A. Teetaert (*La Confession aux laïques dans l'Eglise latine depuis le VIIIe jusqu'au XIVe siècle*, Bruges, 1926). During the first centuries confession of sins seems to have been reserved to the bishop. From the fourth century priests also are called upon for this function. The proof of this is the institution of the penitentiary priest, of whom we shall speak elsewhere. Besides this we find numerous examples after this period of confession made to deacons, monks, even to simple laymen. Generally speaking this confession of sins is not considered as sacramental; it is simply an exercise of asceticism. This can be easily seen from the two passages quoted from St. Benedict, and we could cite a hundred others of the same kind in different periods of the Middle Ages. It must be admitted, however, that there have been errors; and in the East especially, an absolute value has been attributed to this kind of confession. Authors like Lea have profited by this so far as to maintain that confession is of purely ecclesiastical

invention, without any root in the past. Teetaert has studied all their points; he has indicated the errors and explained all the cases.[1]

But besides this confession of sins which is only an ascetical exercise, there are examples in ancient times of an avowal of sins which has the characteristics of a sacramental confession. The text of *St. James* (v, 16), to which we alluded "confess, therefore, your sins one to another . . . that you may be saved" is considered by certain interpreters of Holy Scripture as a confession to the priests. The term *invicem*, ἀλλήλοις, usually means "one to another," but in certain cases it also means *each in his place, in his rank* (or order) (Galtier, *Dict. Apol.* c. 1799. *Cf.* ὑποτασσόμενοι ἀλλήλοις, *Eph.* v. 16). The texts of the *Didache* "thou shall confess thy faults to the Church" (iv, 14) and "on the Lord's day when you assemble for the breaking of bread and for the Eucharist, you will begin by confessing your faults, so that your sacrifice may be pure" xiv, 7, are also interpreted in the same sense (Galtier, *loc. cit.*, col. 1799). The incident recounted in *Acts* xix, 13-20, is also worth quoting. "And many of them that believed came confessing and declaring their deeds" indicates clearly a confession of secret sins, made by the Christians, οἱ πεπιστευκότες, which, according to many interpreters, is said not of the Jews and Greeks preparing for Baptism, but of baptised Christians (*Dict. Apol.*, col. 1798).

In the second century we have scarcely any texts on this point, it is true, but we know the poverty of this century in historical documents. The greater number of the writings have a polemical or apologetical aim.

[1] Teetaert is not the first who has studied this question. Dom Morin, Martène, Lea,and more recently Paul Laurain, *De L'intervention des laiques, des Diacres et des Abbesses dans L'Administration de la Pénitence*, Paris 1897, had already discussed it. But Teetaert is the best.

As Tertullian says in a curious text that must be pondered, *illa* [conversion that ends in baptism] *etiam ethnicis elucet, haec vero* [the second conversion which reinstates the baptised sinner] *quae in ecclesiis agitur, ne Judaeis quidem nota est* (*De Pudic* ix, 19). Lactantius points out confession and Penance as one of the characteristics of the Church: *sciendum est illam esse veram* [*Ecclesiam*] *in qua est confessio et penitentia quae peccata et vulnera . . . salubriter curat* (*Div. Inst.* IV, xxx, 13; P.L. vi, 544; *cf.* what follows about the avowal of sins).

Another indication, which I have no time to develop here, and which besides is only indirect, is the fact that, in certain churches at least, the baptismal initiation or preparation for Baptism included a confession of past sins. Tertullian says so plainly (*De Bapt.* XX), also St. Hippolytus in his *Apostolic Tradition*, and others (Galtier, *Dict. Theol. Cath.* coll. 1801, 1802). This confession before Baptism proves in any case that the avowal of faults was a current practice in the primitive Church.

In the third century public Penance, regulated and organised, supposes in the ordinary way, as we have said, the confession of faults, a confession made to the one entrusted to administer Penance, either bishop or priest.[1] How else could he have judged what kind of penance he was to give in any particular case? Notice that this is accepted even by Protestants and Rationalists, e.g., Lea, K. Müller, K. Hall, Caspari, *etc.*

(iii) *Satisfaction.* The third act of the penitent has

[1] *Cf.* Galtier, *De Paenit.* pp. 322, 323, and *Dict. Théol. Cath.* col. 1803, especially the text of Cyprian, who insists on this confession; also the Council of Carthage in 251, Origen, the *Didascalia*, Aphraates, Pacian, Ambrose. All the texts are in the *Dict. Théol. Cath.*, col. 1805, and the *Dict. Apol., loc. cit.*

not occasioned the same objections or the same difficulties as the first and the second. And yet if we consider it well, it is the one that has undergone the greatest evolution, and the satisfaction imposed to-day in the tribunal of Penance little resembles the satisfaction described to us, I do not say in Tertullian's times, but even in certain centuries of the Middle Ages. What are the penances imposed on the penitent to-day—three Our Fathers and three Hail Marys—compared with the penances enumerated in certain Penitential Books? For stealing, Cummian prescribes one year's penance for a layman, two for a cleric, three for a sub-deacon, four for a deacon, five for a priest, six for a bishop. And those years were to be spent fasting on bread and water!

As for other penances commonly inflicted in the Middle Ages, I believe they would be less distasteful to the English temperament: for instance, a pilgrimage to Rome, to St. James of Compostella or to the Holy Places. But it must be borne in mind that these journeys were not made in the same way as to-day, in sleeping cars or even by aeroplane; they were beset very often with real dangers not to be compared with ours.

Certainly within the last centuries the Church has, on this point as on others, inclined continually towards a more indulgent interpretation of that ancient severity. Nevertheless in the course of this evolution she continues to uphold the necessity of satisfaction, which is a consequence of contrition. The Christian who truly and seriously repents of his sin feels within him the need of making reparation for it. By sin he has offended God; the virtue of Penance is connected with that of justice; sin is like a debt towards God; the sinner is

placed in a state of injustice with regard to God; he must make good the wrong committed against Him. These are theological questions it would be interesting to discuss, but they do not fall within our province. Let us be content to say that the man who has offended God can make satisfaction not *de condigno*, but *de congruo*. This means to say that he can offer a certain compensation to God by his repentance and by other penitential acts; but that this compensation cannot be equivalent, because no comparison is possible between the majesty of God who is offended, and the effort of the sinner to make reparation for his fault.

But it is here that the force of the sacrament comes in, which gives an additional value to a satisfaction which would be otherwise insufficient.

This feeling of the necessity of reparation and satisfaction was felt far more deeply by the Christians of the first centuries than by those of the twentieth. I am speaking, of course, of the majority of Christians, those who might be called, according to an expression very much in vogue, *les chrétiens moyens*, which means, more or less, "average Christians." But there are always, and there always will be, souls more saintly than these, souls who have the sense of the sanctity of God and the malice of sin to the same degree as of old; and when we read the lives of nineteenth-century saints we are still startled by the austerities to which they give themselves and which are in no way surpassed by the severity of the early Christians. As an example, I will only name the little saint of Lisieux who, brought up as she was in all the comforts of life, submitted with superhuman courage to penances and fasts the account of which terrifies us.

It is none the less true, however, that in public

Penance, at least, the satisfaction was rigorous. We need not here study the discipline of penitents in detail, but what little we have said enables us to judge of the severity of the Church at a certain period. I will only quote here the example of Fabiola, who in her humility wished to do penance. St. Jerome tells us how she went through a public penance. At the Church of the Lateran, on Easter Eve, in the presence of the bishop and clergy and all the people, who were deeply affected by the scene, she appeared in the porch among the penitents, with tears and cries, with rent garments, and bare feet and head, casting away her jewels and disfiguring her face.

I must remind you here that besides the works of penance I have already named, such as humiliations, fasts, long prayers, pilgrimages, which were in great favour at a certain time, almsgiving was also recognized as a way of appeasing the anger of God. Kings and princes, dukes and counts were seen making pious foundations, hospitals, monasteries, to blot out their sins.

This study would lead us to that of indulgences. This, however, is a subject which would require a conference to itself. I mention it here merely as a subject connected with the sacrament of Penance. Finally, for those desirous of getting a more complete idea of the history of Penance in the Middle Ages, we must refer them to the study of the Penitentiaries. These are collections made for the use of priests, to help them to assess the gravity of sins and to give a penance in proportion to each fault—fasting, prayers, pilgrimages, alms. It is above all from the seventh to the thirteenth century that these penitentiaries were composed, and on this account that period in the

history of Penance has been styled *la période de la pénitence tarifée*. The land of origin of the Penitentiaries seem to be England or Ireland, and among the best known of them are those of Columbanus, Theodore, Bede and Egbert. Dom Morin in the seventeenth century, and in our own day Wasserschleben, Schmitz, and Fournier, have collected, classified and edited the most important.

(iv) *Absolution*. If the penitent has played his part and fulfilled the conditions imposed on him, if he has given proof of his repentance, if he has accused himself of his faults and promised to make the satisfaction given him, it is now the priest's turn to act and to give the offender absolution from his sins. At the present day this absolution is couched in the following terms:

> May Almighty God have mercy on thee, forgive thee thy sins and bring thee to life everlasting, Amen. May the Almighty and merciful Lord grant thee pardon, absolution and remission of thy sins, Amen.
>
> May Our Lord Jesus Christ absolve thee, and I by His authority absolve thee from all bond of excommunication and interdict, as far as I am able and thou dost need.
>
> Then: I absolve thee from thy sins in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, Amen.
>
> May the Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ, the merits of the Blessed Virgin Mary and of all the saints, together with all the good thou hast done and all the evil thou hast borne, be unto thee for the remission of thy sins, increase of grace, and reward of eternal life, Amen.

The most essential part is: "I absolve thee from thy sins." While pronouncing these words the priest imposes his hand on the penitent, but this action is not generally considered to-day as essential. That is how things happen nowadays. Absolution is the form of the sacrament, the acts of the penitent are the matter, at least in the opinion of the majority of theologians. They still discuss certain points, but we may say that on the main point all are agreed. We shall not stop to explain the different opinions on particular points, but study only questions of general interest.

The form I have just quoted for you, taken from the *Rituale*, is that called the *indicative* form and cannot be replaced by another. This form has not been invariable like that of Baptism and of the Eucharist. There have been and still are varieties of it. Thus in certain periods and in certain countries the *deprecative* (or subjunctive) form has been used. The best known among the examples I can give is that which follows the *Confiteor*: "May Almighty God have mercy upon thee, forgive thee thy sins and bring thee to life everlasting. May the Almighty and merciful Lord grant us pardon, absolution and remission of our sins, Amen." According to Fr. Galtier (*Dict. Apol.*, *Pénitence*, col. 1799) "nothing prevents us from seeing a real absolution in what is here said." He adds that if a priest used this form he would transgress the commands of the Church, but probably would absolve truly. According to Fr. Bainvel and Fr. Galtier, it would be perhaps under this form or some similar form during the liturgical service that the Sacrament of Penance was administered, and its oldest origins should be sought in this direction.

This variety in the form of absolution should not

astonish us. Theologians admit to-day a certain evolution in the history of sacraments, and that the Church's power over matter and form is more extensive than was believed at a certain period. Our Lord instituted the sacraments of the New Law—this has been shown you in the preceding papers—but He has left His Church a wide power to regulate their details. Consequently we must not be surprised to see that the sacraments have not been administered everywhere and always in the same manner, and that certain elements, considered formerly as essential, are perhaps only accidental. I am not going to develop these questions, which are discussed elsewhere. The only point that interests us at the moment is what the Church's practice has been concerning absolution.

That absolution (pronounced by the priest or bishop) is necessary for the reconciliation of sinners must be believed as a matter of faith. We must confess, however, that a certain number of our adversaries are far from admitting the fact. Thus it becomes necessary to establish its existence historically. The words of Our Lord quoted and explained in the first part of this paper do not admit of any other interpretation. To bind or to loose, to open or to close, to forgive sins or to retain them, means in other words that those who have received this power have the right to give absolution or to refuse it. It matters little what name you give to absolution; you must admit that if the sinner has made satisfaction and is accepted as reconciled, this reconciliation must be declared by somebody who has authority to do so.

How was that power exercised in the first centuries? It is not always easy to say. In the first part of this paper we mentioned the example of St. Peter in the

case of Ananias and Saphira; of Simon Magus; also of St. Paul and the incestuous man of Corinth. In the sub-Apostolic period, St. Ignatius insists on the power of the bishop, who should be the centre, the head, the chief of his flock: this carries with it naturally the right of receiving into the communion of the Church and of excluding from it. Moreover, St. Ignatius mentions this intervention of the bishop for the remission of sins (*ad Philad.* VIII, P.G. v, 833). Firmilian, Hippolytus, Tertullian, Aphraates and other Fathers of the fourth and fifth centuries speak in the same tone (*Dict. Theol. Cath.*, *Absolution*, col. 146). The Letter of Clement of Rome to James of Jerusalem (apocryphal, but of the second century) runs as follows: "I bequeath to Clement [St. Peter is speaking] the power of binding and loosing . . . the bishops have the power of opening and closing the gates of heaven" (*ibid.* col. 146 *sqq.*). In public Penance we have seen that ordinarily this right fell to the bishop. Callistus in his edict says; *ego moechiae et fornicationis delicta penitentia functis dimitto* (*De Pud.* 1).

The institution of the penitentiary priest is also significant. The origin of it is not known exactly. According to Socrates it took place at the time of the schism of Novatian; according to Sozomen it goes back to the origin of the Church. In any case it can be seen in practice at Constantinople in the fourth century. Public confession having become odious on account of the scandal possible, the bishop chose a priest known for his integrity, and confided to him the care of receiving the penitent's confession and of giving absolution. The bishop, however, reserved the administration of public Penance and reconciliation on Holy Thursday. Nestorius suppressed the office in 390 under well-known circumstances.

The rôle of the priest appointed to reconcile the penitent is better seen in two circumstances where his intervention is called upon, and which are not in the domain of public Penance—the reconciliation of heretics, and that of the dying, who must be absolved before being able to accomplish the penance. In the case of heretics a distinction was drawn. Apostate heretics were submitted to a severe and rigorous penance; simple heretics were apparently subjected to a less severe penance, which included the imposition of hands and was very similar to private Penance (*Dict. Apol.* col. 1839, and *Rech. Sc. relig.* 1914, p. 971 *Absolution ou Confirmation*). This is a case of private Penance existing independently of public Penance and where the priest alone reconciled the penitent. An analogous case is that of the sick in danger of death. This was a fairly frequent case, for, just as some—more astute than prudent—put off Baptism right up to the moment of death, so as to benefit by a general absolution, so also others waited till death to be reconciled to the Church. As public Penance was not possible, the rulers of the Church were then content with private Penance and the priest who was summoned heard the confession and gave absolution. This we deduce from St. Ambrose (*in Luc.* vii, P.L. x col. 1758D); St. Augustine (*De Conj. Adult.*, xxviii, 35 P.L., xl, 430,) and other texts quoted in *Dict. Apol.*, col. 1845. The thirteenth canon of Nicæa, summarising this discipline, says: "The bishop is bound to give the Eucharist to anyone who asks for it at the point of death, but only after the examination of the penitent" [confession]. The Council of Elvira, more severe, made reservations in certain cases. St. Leo is in accordance with Nicaea (*Ep.* cviii, P.L., liv, 1013; *cf.* 1012, 1205 *sqq.*). Also the *Statuta Ecclesiae*

*antiqua* (P.L., lvi, 882). In this last case the absolution (reconciliation) is given by the imposition of hands.

The last question is that of the relation between public and private Penance. In the opinion of some, especially Protestants and Rationalists, but also some Catholic writers (Boudinhon, Vacandard) there was for centuries only public Penance. According to others (notably many Catholic writers) there was always private Penance by the side of public Penance. It seems to me that the question must be stated in different terms. If you say that for a certain time there existed only public Penance, it seems difficult to reconcile the fact with Catholic doctrine as formulated in the Council of Trent. If, on the other hand, you say that there has always been private Penance, it is not easy to prove it historically. It seems to me that public Penance and private Penance must not be considered as two distinct and independent institutions, but as one sacrament usually administered publicly, but in certain cases privately. Besides, the details of Penance varied throughout the centuries while the essence remained the same. Public Penance was not exclusively, absolutely and necessarily public in all its manifestations. It does not exclude necessarily an element of secrecy; on the contrary it admits and even demands one—at least in certain circumstances—at one time the confession, at another the absolution, or even the contrition. This we have seen in the study we have made of it. Little by little the public manifestation of Penance was suppressed: contrition, confession, satisfaction, absolution, became in some degree a personal matter between the penitent and the priest appointed to give absolution. This evolution can be followed from the fourth to the eighth century and

after. The outward form has changed, but the essential elements—the acts of the penitent and the absolution of the priest—are maintained. This system, it seems to me, solves the difficulties best, and it has many points in common with that expounded by Batiffol, d'Alès and Galtier.

Penance therefore, is rightly considered by Catholics as a sacrament instituted by Our Lord Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins committed after Baptism. This belief is founded on His words and on His promise. The Apostles used this power, and despite the scarcity of documents for the period following the Apostolic epoch, its existence in the second and third centuries is proved by several texts. At the close of the second century, and during the third, it underwent the attack of heretical sects who, under the pretext of forming a Church composed only of the "elect" refused to pardon certain crimes. The struggle against the Montanists and the Novatianists induced the rulers of the Church to proclaim more energetically her power to forgive sins. It was during the course of the third century that the institution of Penance received a more complete organisation. New modifications in its administration were effected in the fourth century, and in the following centuries. Gradually public Penance was eliminated and scarcely any part of it remained, apart from the liturgical ceremonies of Ash Wednesday and Maundy Thursday. Private Penance, however, which succeeded it, keeps its principal characteristics: the penitent is bound—just as he always was—to show his contrition, to confess his sins, to accept the satisfaction. The priest, on his side, gives the absolution and reconciles the sinner to the Church, and in that

way, to God also. In brief, the transformations undergone by this sacrament through the centuries are not greater than those of other sacraments. The Church is a living institution; the needs which she has to satisfy are not the same in every age, and she must adapt herself to the conditions of life.

Penance and the Holy Eucharist are the sacraments most familiar to us, if I may say so; Holy Orders are reserved to a very small minority in the Church; Matrimony is not within the reach of all; Extreme Unction awaits the Christian at the end of his life, and usually men are not in a hurry to receive it; Baptism and Confirmation belong to the past. On the other hand, Penance and the Holy Eucharist are part of our daily life and can be received often. They are, so to speak, the "practical" sacraments; that is why it is so important for us to understand them well.

## *BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE*

Lea's *History of Auricular Confession*, in 3 vols., although superficial and often wrong, as well as being at times fantastic in its criticisms, has nevertheless excited a new interest in the subject, which has led to a more thorough study of the origins of Penance. The various difficulties find an adequate answer in articles in the *Revue d'histoire et de littérature* (1897-8), by Mgr. Boudinhon; in the *Revue du Clergé* (1898) by l'Abbé Vacandard; in the *Etudes* (March 5, 1900) by Père Harent, S.J.; and in the late Mgr. Batiffol's study, *La discipline pénitentielle dans l'église primitive; les origines de la pénitence*, in his *Etudes d'histoire et de théologie positive*, tome I (1904).

The articles *Absolution* and *Confession* in the *Dictionnaire de théologie catholique* should also be consulted, and above all

the treatises, *De Paenitentia, tractatus dogmatico-historicus* (Paris, 1923), by Père Galtier, S.J., and *De Sacramento Paenitentiae* (Paris 1926), by Père d'Alès, S.J.; in this latter there is a good bibliography of the subject. We may note also G. Rauschen's *Eucharist and Penance in the First Six Centuries of the Church* (Engl. transl.: Herder), and an article by the late Dr. Swete, an Anglican, *Penitential Discipline in the first three centuries*, in the *Journal of Theological Studies*, Vol. IV, pp. 330 ff. A useful book recently published in English is *The Catholic Church and Confession*, by the Rev. H. Thurston, S.J., and the Rev. L. W. Geddes, S.J., in the "Calvert" series. Other works are mentioned in the general bibliography at the end of the book.

# VII

# HOLY ORDERS

By the Rev. Bernard Grimley, D.D., Ph.D.

## I: NEW TESTAMENT ORIGINS

Much modern criticism is fouled by the early Protestant ideas to which it is heir. This applies even to those circles where the notion would be scouted as antiquated, the so-called "higher criticism" circles. Critics cannot rid themselves of the obsession of the Bible, and the Bible alone, as the rule and source of Faith. Everything must be found there in black and white if it is to be accepted as primitive Christianity. Hence we get endless and wearying discussions about the question of Orders, all of which revolve round the meaning of ἱερεύς, ἐπίσκοπος, and πρεσβύτερος. No one would deny a certain value to these discussions, which are not profitless, provided it is realised that Scripture criticism is only one element in the question. The aims and practices of any institution which has preserved even a material continuity with the past will be understood with as much accuracy from a study of its present condition as from a microscopic examination of its first documents. Thus, one will get at least as much light on Chaucer's England and its people from a study of the modern Englishman as from minute textual criticism of his poems. There is at any rate a material continuity

between Chaucer's England and our own, and an outsider—a Chinese for instance—would welcome the chance of knowing modern England if he wished to understand the England of Chaucer's time. There still remain a thousand and one affinities, psychological sympathies, similarities of phrases and ideas, between Chaucer's England and our own, though nobody would suggest a formal continuity between the two things on account of the vast disruption of the Reformation.

So with this question of Orders, or any other question of Christian faith and history. We cannot start off with our own interpretation of the primitive documents as the absolute canon and rule, and proceed to discard from later history and tradition whatever does not conform with it. There is at least a material continuity between the primitive Church and what men call to-day Christianity. Therefore, there must be in modern Christianity a wealth of illustration of what the primitive Church believed, and it is in consequence absurd to treat history and tradition as a source of inferior value to the Scriptures. On account of the material continuity between the early and the modern Church, history and tradition, properly applied, are at least of equal value with Scriptural documents.

This contention becomes much stronger where an institution has preserved formal continuity of purpose, of means and of character, for then it becomes sheer folly to neglect to study its present condition as the surest guide to its primitive state. Now the Catholic case is that there is a formal continuity between the primitive Church and present-day Roman Catholicism. The only thing that has to be allowed for is the Catholic idea of development, in the organism from childhood

to perfection, in dogma a development or growth of understanding. Granted that, the Catholic case is that the Church of to-day is formally the same thing as the Church of yesterday and any other day of its history. Unfortunately, though, that very point is denied by those who are not of our fold, and so all discussion of any individual fact, like this one of Orders, must be hampered with endless technicalities; and a high degree of probability is all that we can hope sometimes to win for our case, in the teeth of much opposition, when we rest it on the formal continuity of our present with the past. Fortunately, then, we can state the case another way. We can appeal to the material continuity of so-called Christianity with the primitive Church and state a convincing case to a man of good will. On that basis we are in possession of the following facts: that from the second century till the sixteenth Christianity was hierarchic in character, that there was a sharp division between the laity and the clergy, that the clergy were made by rites of divine institution, and that the three subordinated orders of bishops, priests, and deacons were sacramental. On that East and West were solidly agreed, and on that they are still agreed to-day except for those who are descendants of the sixteenth-century innovators. To this very day the question of orders is one of the biggest stumbling-blocks in the path to reunion between Western Reformed churches and Eastern local Churches. We can go a little further: among the Western Reformed Churches there are some who admit the hierarchy as a historical fact, though they deny its divine institution.

That puts us in possession of a strong case, which it will take much to overthrow. If there be but a material continuity between modern Christianity and the

primitive Christian Church it is yet hard to understand how such ideas are found so early, become so widespread and are held with such tenacity for so long—and not less but more tenaciously on account of the onslaught which has been made on them since the sixteenth century—if they are not the ideas of primitive Christianity. We could afford to leave our case at that and remain on the defensive, answering the objections made against it, always remembering that difficulties and objections do not disprove a case which rests on solid and unanswerable arguments. Thus it is a most serious objection against the evolutionary hypothesis that as regards the higher orders of beings it can never be scientifically proved, but that in itself does not destroy the value of it, which is that it has opened up vast fields of investigation and knowledge and provided a basis of profitable research. So with our question of orders. It is objected that we cannot prove it apodeictically from the New Testament. If it were polite we might shrug our shoulders, for it is a singularly inept objection so far as we are concerned. We never expected to be able to do what is asked of us. We never proposed the Bible and the Bible only as our canon. We rest our case on a broader basis altogether. However, since we do undoubtedly regard the Bible as a source of faith we can look at what it tells us.

That the priesthood of the old Dispensation was sacrificial, divinely constituted, and that its members were selected from particular tribes and families, is a commonplace. Some form of divine vocation would normally be expected, then, in the new Dispensation, and indeed St. Paul emphasises the fact that it is so (*Heb.* v, 4), even in the case of Our Lord Himself, who

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is "called by God a high priest, according to the order of Melchisedech" (*ibid.*, v, 10). The first fact that emerges from a careful study of the New Testament is that there is no trace of a democratic origin of the Christian Apostleship, episcopate or priesthood. Whatever we may have to say about the method of electing candidates to the office it is quite clear that the circle to which they were invited and appointed is not a creation of the people. "You have not chosen me," says Our Lord, "but I have chosen you; and have appointed you" (*Jn.* xv, 16). The necessary power to do this was given Him from above by His Father, not from below. He is careful to stress this on many occasions, never more than when He is commissioning His Apostles: "All power is given to me in heaven and in earth" (*Mt.* xxviii, 18); and "As the Father hath sent me [with plenitude of authority] I also send you" (*Jn.* xx, 21). The flow of authority is always from above, descending upon the Apostolic college and not rising to it as a mandate from the people. The Apostleship was not therefore an office of popular origin, nor do the Apostles, in their dealings with the faithful, betray any consciousness of being beholden to the people for their office. In all their pronouncements runs the note of authority, of superiority and of power. They are not conscious of a deposing power possessed by the faithful, nor do they allow the faithful to thrust new members into their own select circle. In their official functions they act as a body apart from and superior to the generality of the faithful.

It might be imagined that their exclusiveness rested on their particular intimacy with the Master, but such is not the case, as can be seen from the account of the election of Matthias to fill the place which Judas had

abandoned. The invitation to consider worthy candidates comes from Peter himself. It is he, and not the general body of the faithful, who takes the initiative in this important matter. On that occasion "the number of persons together was about an hundred and twenty" (*Acts* i, 15). Of those we may safely estimate that a good score at least were covered by St. Peter's restriction of their choice to one "of those men who have companied with us, *all the time that the Lord Jesus came in and went out amongst us, beginning from the baptism of John, until the day wherein he was taken up from us*" (*Acts* i, 21-2). Even in such a select gathering it is something special to belong to the Apostolic college, so we must look to something else besides intimacy with Our Lord to explain the exclusiveness of it. We must notice, too, that the Apostles make a direct appeal to God to chose between "Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus" and Matthias who by the "casting of lots" was "numbered with the eleven Apostles."

To what else can we look to explain this exclusiveness unless it be to the particular sacredness of the Apostolic office? And surely we do not look in vain if that office was then understood to contain jurisdiction and authority (*Mt.* xxviii, 18; xviii, 18), the power of forgiving and retaining sin (*Jn.* xx, 22), authentic teaching divinely safeguarded (*Mt.* xxviii, 18-20), and a commission to preside as Our Lord had presided at the breaking of bread (*Lk.* xxii, 19), to say nothing of other powers, like that of giving the Holy Ghost and anointing the sick for their recovery, which were not charismatic and which were reserved to the "elders." There is sufficient in this to make the Apostleship a very special and sacred thing without recourse to the charismatic powers of healing and prophecy which

undoubtedly adorned the holders of the office until the building-up of the Church should be completed (*Eph.* iv, 12). Certain it is that the way to a share in this office is uniformly co-option by the existing members, and the right to proffer candidates seems to have been always a concession to the faithful by the college, if we may judge by the cases of Matthias and the seven deacons. God alone has the power to thrust new members into the society of the Apostles, as he did in the case of Paul; but the faithful have no such power. Co-option, as in the case of the Seven, could be to a limited share in the functions of the Apostles. It was not necessarily co-option to the fulness of the Apostleship, and as the latter was made up of many powers and functions there existed in fact a rational basis for a graduated and subordinated hierarchy.

How did the Apostolic college provide for its corporate continuance? Here we are at the crux of the question about Orders, and it must be admitted that later traditions are much clearer on this point than are the Scriptural records. For, while it seems fairly clear from the Apocalypse that St. John instituted a local and monarchic episcopate in accordance with the divine plans, it is nevertheless far from clear what was the mode of action of the Apostolic college even after the dispersion from Judea. Prior to the dispersion there seems little doubt that for some time collegiate action by the Twelve was the normal thing (*Acts* vi, 2 *et sqq.;* viii, 14; ix, 27; xi, 1-18 and 29-30; xv, 4, 6, 22, 24, 27-28, 34, *etc.*, *etc.*). But quite suddenly and without warning we begin to hear of "ancients" being associated with the Apostles, (*Acts* xv, 4, 23, 30) corresponding with them and receiving letters from them. Who and what were these "ancients"? Relying solely on the

Scripture records it seems quite impossible to give a definite answer. There is as yet no end to the controversy about the meaning of πρεσβύτερος and ἐπίσκοπος, and perhaps there never will be, though it is, on the authority of St. Clement of Rome (*I Cor.* 44. Kirch's *Enchiridion Fontium*, No. 13) one of the most ancient controversies that have agitated the Christian fold.

If they were priests, why, we are asked, were they (and the Apostles) not known by the title ἱερεύς, which indicates a truly sacrificial priesthood? Why call them ancients (πρεσβυτέρους) and overseers (ἐπισκόπους) if their functions were truly priestly? At first the objection seems a grave one, though it is not too safe to judge a man's office by his title alone without regard to his functions. Have we not aldermen who are not old? In fact the very word *priest* which we use so readily in our English tongue may help us to bring this problem nearer home. Though there is an Anglo-Saxon form *preost*, it is nevertheless quite clear that *preost* is not a Saxon root at all, but only a corruption from a low Latin form of *presbyter*, which is in turn the Greek πρεσβύτερος, of Christian origin. In all probability the Anglo-Saxon word for *priest* was *weyman* or something like it. Why, when the Saxons came in contact with the Christian priesthood, by that time professedly a sacrificial priesthood, did they not call the priests weymen? Did the Christian priests refuse that title? Did they insist on making the Anglo-Saxons try to mouth *presbyter*, and so get *preost?* It seems very likely.

It is quite conceivable that the Christian priests had no desire to be thought of as equivalent to the pagan weymen, that they wished to emphasise the difference between their own priesthood and any other. As a

writer in the *Catholic Gazette* (July 1926, pp. 188-9) puts it:

"The words *sacrificing priesthood* are not commonly used in the New Testament. The reason is that if they had been they would, at any rate at first, have been entirely misunderstood. *Priests* then meant either Jewish or pagan priests, and nobody had heard of or imagined any other kind. Christianity had a new kind of sacrifice, and a new kind of priest to offer it; and these had to be called by new names to distinguish them from the old ones. But it should be remembered that the word *priest* is constantly applied in the New Testament to the ministers of the Gospel. They are called *presbyters* or *elders*, and *priest* is merely the contracted form of *presbyter*, so that, curiously enough, when we speak of pagan or Jewish *priests*, we are really using a Christian word in a pagan or Jewish sense.

This of itself goes some way to show that the functions of Christian and non-Christian ministers had something in common. What they had in common was, of course, the offering of sacrifice. The Christian sacrifice is entirely different in character from non-Christian sacrifices, but it is not less real; in fact, it is the only real one. St. Paul shows this quite unmistakably in *I Cor.* x, where he draws an exact parallel between the Christian and the pagan sacrifices—'the table of the Lord' and 'the table of devils,' and 'the chalice of the Lord' and 'the chalice of devils.' In *Heb.* xiii, again, he speaks of a Christian 'altar'; but an altar, of course, implies both a priest and a sacrifice. In *Acts* xiii we read that the disciples 'ministered to the Lord' (λειτουργούντων

δὲ αὐτῶν τῷ κυρίῳ); but the Greek word translated 'ministered' is significant. An exact translation would be 'performed the liturgy.'

The word *liturgy* comes from Athens, where it was applied to services performed, either voluntarily or under obligation, by wealthy persons for the State. In its Christian use it naturally signified an offering made to God; and though it at first included all religious worship of the kind now called liturgical, it was always specially applied to the Eucharist, as the principal *service* or liturgy *par excellence*, and soon came to mean nothing else. At present in the Eastern Church the Liturgy means precisely what we call the Mass. It is, therefore, in the highest degree probable that when St. Luke spoke of 'ministering to the Lord,' he was thinking principally of the Sacrifice of the Mass, though, no doubt, he had also in view the devotions which preceded, accompanied, and followed, the great central act of worship, as the Breviary offices and the proper of the Mass do to-day.

Further light is thrown on the New Testament meaning of *liturgy* by St. Paul. He says, in *Rom.* xv, 16, that he is the 'minister of Christ among the Gentiles' (λειτουργὸν Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ εἰς τὰ ἔθνη). But the word translated 'minister' is the Greek word λειτουργός applied by St. Paul to Our Lord in His character of High Priest in *Heb.* viii, 2, where obviously its sacerdotal and sacrificial meaning is beyond question. In the same passage, *Rom.* xv, 16, the Apostle again speaks of himself as a sacrificing priest; this time using the ordinary Greek word. He says he 'sanctifies the Gospel, that the oblation of the Gentiles may be made acceptable and sancti-

fied' (*ἱερουργοῦντα τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ θεοῦ, ἵνα γένηται ἡ προσφορὰ τῶν ἐθνῶν εὐπρόσδεκτος*). The meaning of 'sanctifying the Gospel' in the English version is not a little obscure; it becomes clear in the original Greek, in which the word translated 'sanctify' is the ordinary Greek word for offering sacrifice as a priest. We might, therefore, translate the words by 'offering the Gospel sacrifice that the oblation of the Gentiles may be made acceptable and holy'—the second 'sanctify' being a different word, in the Greek, from the first. Whether St. Paul meant precisely that he offered the sacrifice of the Mass for the Gentiles, or that in a general way he made an offering to God of his preaching to them, does not greatly matter. The point is that in either case he spoke and thought of himself as a 'hierurge' or sacrificing priest, otherwise he could hardly have used the word, even metaphorically. He must, indeed, have shrunk with horror from applying to himself an expression so closely associated with the ancient Jewish and pagan rites, if he had been anything like the vehement anti-sacerdotalist that some people have supposed he was.

It is thus sufficiently evident from the New Testament that there were in the Church, from its very beginning, priests whose business it was to offer sacrifice. If any confirmation were needed of the passages we have referred to, it might be found in the fact that by the end of the second century the use of the ancient Latin word for a sacrificing priest of any kind (*sacerdos*), as a synonym for the newer title of presbyter, had become fully established. The two words were used interchangeably, as they are still. This could not have come to pass unless the distinc-

tive function of the Christian priest had been recognised from the first as that which was prefigured in the ancient sacrificial worship. Otherwise it would have been as impossible as that the Americans or the French should suddenly, without protest or remark, begin to give their President the title of Emperor or King."

So much for the etymological difficulty arising out of the use of ἐπίσκοπος and πρεσβύτερος to designate those whom we know from tradition to have been the first Christian priests, instead of the title commonly used in classical Greek. All that has been said receives very strong confirmation from a close study of the Eucharist as a sacrifice, for which we refer the reader to a previous volume of this series *Catholic Faith in the Holy Eucharist*. We must now face the fact that it is impossible to translate the Scripture words ἐπίσκοπος and πρεσβύτερος by the traditional equivalent of "bishop" and "priest" with any degree of accuracy at all. It seems very probable that we must regard them as synonymous and interchangeable (*Acts* xx, 17 and 28; *I Tim.* iii, 1-7; *Tit.* i, 5-9).

Usually it will be safer to render them both by one word "priest," since the episcopal character certainly includes the presbyteral, but not *vice versa*. What *in fact* were the ἐπίσκοποι of early Apostolic times as distinct from the πρεοβύτεροι we cannot ascertain. Later traditions tempt us to think that ἐπίσκοπος ought to mean "bishop," but the Scripture text alone does not warrant the inference. It is likely that in very early times the Apostolic college regarded the world as one vast Prefecture-Apostolic, to borrow a term of our own days, to be administered for a time by them all in a

collegiate capacity, and that most of their agents, ἐπίσκοποι and πρεσβύτεροι, were but priests, though there are occasional exceptions. After the dispersion the idea of local episcopates, such as St. John founded, would occur more readily. The time would then appear more apt for this further carrying-out of the divine plan, though in this regard we must not forget the establishing of St. Peter's see first at Antioch, and then at Rome, and St. James's bishopric of Jerusalem from the beginning. What St. Paul did is not so clear, though certainly from all the indications Timothy was a bishop and a monarchic bishop. But was he a local or territorial bishop, or just an agent of St. Paul's to be moved at will? The latter is more likely. That the Apostles left instructions to be carried out at their decease is clear, as we shall see, from St. Clement of Rome; and it is not difficult to surmise that those instructions were for a local and monarchic episcopate. That is what meets our eyes as the usual thing in the second century. The plural episcopate is unknown to history (Michiels, *L'origine de l'episcopat*, p. 220).

Our Lord could certainly have instituted His Apostles to the priesthood by a simple command and without external ceremony of any kind. Being God He is not limited to sacramental forms of action. The Council of Trent bids us look to the Last Supper for the ordination of the Apostles. "If anyone says that by these words: 'Do this for a commemoration of me' (*Lk.* xxii, 19) Christ did not constitute the Apostles priests, or did not ordain that they and other priests should offer His Body and Blood: let him be anathema" (Session 22, c.2). Though the setting of the Last Supper is in the highest degree ceremonial and ritual, there is nevertheless no trace of a distinctive divinely appointed rite

for ordination contained in the Scripture account. In giving the accessory power of forgiving sins (*Jn.* xx, 22) Our Lord breathed on His Apostles before saying to them "Receive ye the Holy Ghost" and giving them the sacred power and commission.

The only rite or ceremony for the co-option of new members into the Apostolic college mentioned in Holy Writ is the imposition of hands accompanied by prayer. Imposition of hands was a ceremony used more than once by our Lord; when curing the woman "bowed together" with infirmity (*Lk.* xiii, 13), when curing the blind man (*Mk.* viii, 25), and when blessing the children (*Mk.* x. 16), etc.

The ruler of *Mt.* ix, 18, asks Our Lord to "come, lay thy hand upon her [his daughter] and she shall live," while it was to be one of the powers of the believers in Christ that "they shall lay their hands upon the sick and they shall recover" (*Mk.* xvi, 18). (See also *Mt.* xix, 13 and 15; *Mk.* vii, 32; vi, 5; and *Lk.* iv, 40.) From these passages we may safely infer the aptitude of the ceremony to show power and authority in the one who uses it, as well as some signification of a grace and virtue possessed by him. It is well adapted to become the ceremony for ordination, and we first find it in use at the ordination of the Seven (*Acts* vi, 6). Next it is used as the sign by which the Holy Ghost is given to the believers (*Acts* viii, 17-19) and excites the cupidity of Simon Magus. Saul saw Ananias in a vision "coming in and putting his hands upon him, that he might receive his sight" (*Acts* ix, 12) and when Ananias came, "laying his hands upon him, he said: Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus hath sent me . . . that thou mayest receive thy sight and be filled with the Holy Ghost" (*Acts* ix, 17). The next mention is in *Acts* xiii, 3, where

its meaning is the sacramental one, for the ordination of Saul and Barnabas. "And as they were ministering to the Lord and fasting, the Holy Ghost said to them: Separate me Saul and Barnabas, for the work whereunto I have taken them. Then they, fasting and praying and imposing their hands upon them, *sent them away*. So they, *being sent by the Holy Ghost*, etc." (*Acts xiii*, 2-4). At Ephesus Paul imposes hands on his converts to give them the Holy Ghost (*Acts* xix, 6); in Malta he uses the ceremony in the curing of the father of Publius, while in *Heb.* vi, 2, he has an important reference to the "*doctrine* of baptisms and imposition of hands" as part of the Christian scheme.

In the New Testament, then, the ceremony of imposition of hands is used for a fourfold purpose, (*a*) for blessing, (*b*) for curing, (*c*) for giving the Holy Ghost sacramentally and (*d*) for establishing certain people in their office. This last purpose, the one that concerns us here, is further illustrated in St. Paul's epistles to Timothy, where we read much of extreme importance, since the author (chapters iii to v) is expressly treating of the ministry (*τῆς ἐπισκοπῆς*) and its functions, and of the qualities desirable in those who seek it. He mentions (*I Tim.* iii) "bishops" "priests" and deacons, and says (*I Tim.* iv, 14) "Neglect not the grace that is in thee: which was given thee by prophecy, with the imposition of the hands of the priesthood" (*διὰ προφητείας μετὰ ἐπιθέσεως τῶν χειρῶν τοῦ πρεσβυτερίου*). Here the reference is undoubtedly not to charismatic grace,[1] for that cannot be "neglected," but to sacramental grace. Let us call it personal grace, which can be increased and strength-

[1] *χάρισμα* is the word used; but that can mean sanctifying grace (*Rom.* v. 15), and the context show that it means that here.

ened by use and co-operation, and diminished by neglect. This grace was given through the imposition of hands, *i.e.*, sacramentally, by St. Paul (*II Tim.* i, 6) and his brother priests, and it is that grace which has established him in the office which he holds. Such is obviously the tenor of the passage.

"Impose not hands lightly on any man" he tells Timothy later on, (*I Tim.* v, 22)—a tribute to the importance of the rite. In the second epistle to "dearly-beloved" Timothy he inculcates once more the same teaching. "I admonish thee that thou stir up the grace of God which is in thee by the imposition of my hands. For God hath not given us the spirit of fear," etc. (*II Tim.* i, 6). Again notice that (as in the previous epistle) it is certainly a real imposition of hands and not a showing of hands of which the writer tells us; and here again the same remarks apply to the nature of the grace and its effects as were made about the passage from the first epistle. We are surely not exceeding our warrant if we urge that a conscientious consideration of these passages would incline one to the view that there existed in the early Church a visible and external rite, productive of personal grace, by which the subject was set up and established in the sacred office of the episcopate or presbyterate; that, in other words, there is Scriptural evidence for Orders being regarded as a sacrament. That rite was one which could be used for other purposes, and was so used, but its determination to the particular effect of Holy Orders was found in the accompanying prayers and the whole complex of the ceremony. The imposition of hands was a sacred sign when used for the purpose of establishing men in the office of "elder" or "overseer." It was a sacrament. How aptly, then, does the Council of Trent

teach that "if anyone says that Order, or Sacred Ordination, is not truly and properly a sacrament instituted by Christ the Lord; that it is a kind of human figment devised by men unskilled in ecclesiastical matters; or that it is only a sort of rite for choosing ministers of the word of God and the sacraments: let him be anathema" (Session 23, c.3).

The contention of Hatch (*The Organisation of the Early Christian Church*) and others that the distinction between clergy and laity was based solely upon the need of maintaining good order in the Church, and that the priests were mere office-holders whose mandate came from the community, is opposed to the whole spirit of the New Testament.

That the priesthood of the New Law was to be perpetual is clear from the care taken to provide for its continuance. Throughout the epistles to Timothy it is tacitly assumed that nothing is more incumbent upon the clergy than to provide for the continuance of their office, and to provide for it with care and circumspection. To Titus St. Paul writes: "For this cause I left thee in Crete; that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting and shouldest ordain priests in every city, as I also appointed thee" (*Tit.* i, 5). He then tells him what kind of men to choose for the office. (For another example of St. Paul's care to provide the faithful with a ministry, see *Acts* xiv, 22.) It is ludicrous nonsense to say that St. Paul would have insisted so much on the qualities to be expected of a minister if a minister was originally no more, or very little more, than a school-inspector. Why in that case look for men only once married, humble, meek, gentle, sober, just, holy and continent? Those only are fit for the ministry whose lives are not merely

blameless, but holy and perfect. It is a lot to ask of a mere inspector, caretaker, policeman, or whatever else modern writers have chosen to call the first Christian ministers. In his discourse to the clergy of Ephesus St. Paul tells them: "Take heed to yourselves and to the whole flock, wherein the Holy Ghost hath placed you bishops [clergy] to rule the Church of God which he hath purchased with his own blood" (*Acts* xx, 28). That sentence might have been penned for the express purpose of denying modern Congregational and Presbyterian notions of the priesthood. The measure of the Holy Ghost's concern about the clergy is that they are to rule a flock bought at a very dear price, by the blood of the Son of God. They are to be deputies for the Good Shepherd and must therefore be supernaturally fitted for their sublime office. So much for the sacramental character of Holy Orders as shown in the New Testament.

It is to the liturgies that we must turn, to the earliest sacramentaries and rituals, if we would understand the sacredness of Holy Orders in the early Church. There is not one, from the earliest in the Παράδοσις Ἀποστολική or the *Canons of Hippolytus*, whether known to have been used or coming to us as mere literary remains, that does not breathe the sacramental idea. Many of them can be read in Denzinger's *Ritus Orientalium* or in Goar's *Euchologion*; others can be found in the various sacramentaries. All of them without exception favour the Catholic concept of Holy Orders. All of them implicitly condemn every species of modern thought on the subject. More cannot be written here on this aspect of the question on account of the limitations of space, but it is a profitable point and worthy of study.

## II: BISHOPS AND PRIESTS

In the form given us in the Παράδοσις only two omissions are noted for the ordination of priests, as distinct from the ordination of bishops. If a priest is to be ordained we are instructed to omit the reference to the making of clergy and being seated on the high throne. Otherwise the form is the same. This brings us to the question of the distinction between the various grades of clergy, and here, on account of the obscurity of Holy Scripture, history and tradition must be our guides. First of all, then, how many sacred orders are there? There are three, the episcopate, the priesthood and the diaconate. These alone are sacramental (according to what seems the more likely doctrine) and are known as the Major Orders. During and after the third century of our era, lower grades than these are mentioned in the ranks of the clergy, more numerous in the West than in the East. St. Hippolytus mentions lectors and subdeacons. The Council of Laodicea in A.D. 350 mentions porters, lectors, exorcists and subdeacons, but not acolytes. St. Gregory the Great (604) attached the obligation of celibacy to the subdiaconate in the West, which probably accounts for the enhanced prestige of that order in the West, where by the thirteenth century it came to be regarded as a major, but not sacramental, order. In the East it was always regarded as a minor order. It is best to regard *major* and *sacramental* as synonymous terms, and we shall be on safe grounds doctrinally and historically if we do so, since the Minor Orders are of admitted ecclesiastical origin, and in the rites of their administration neither

is there an indication of a grace conferred, nor are the words "Receive the Holy Ghost" found as part of the form, nor, finally is the imposition of hands—which as we shall see is the essential matter of ordination—given in any of them. East and West have always agreed that only the episcopate, the priesthood, and the diaconate are sacramental, viewing them either as part of one sacrament whose totality is the episcopate, or as separate sacraments conferring separate and distinct characters, of which the episcopate is the highest and most complete.

Nominally all three Major Orders can be found in the Sacred Scriptures, but we have noticed the difficulty in establishing any real distinction, on Scripture grounds alone, between the episcopate and the priesthood. The Council of Trent teaches that there is in the Catholic Church a divinely instituted hierarchy of bishops, priests and deacons; that bishops are superior to priests and have the power of confirming and ordaining (Session 23, cc. 6 and 7). That decree is fully warranted by history and tradition, for it is a plain historical fact that from the second century onwards the hierarchy is presented to us as consisting of those three "superimposed degrees," to use the phrase of St. Clement of Alexandria. They are presented to us as normally, if not regularly, made up everywhere of a single, local, monarchic bishop, a group of priests often referred to collectively as the presbyterate, and a number of deacons not called by a collective name—and in that order of precedence. Particularly is this so in the epistles of St. Ignatius of Antioch to the Ephesians, Magnesians, Trallians, Romans, Philadelphians and Smyrneans. St. Ignatius died about the year 107 (Harnack says 115), so his testimony is of particu-

lar importance. Before dealing with these epistles, though, it will be as well to touch on one or two classical passages from other sources. The first is from the *Didache*, or *Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*, a document originating in Palestinian or Syrian surroundings and written for the guidance of Judeo-Christians. Its date of composition is perhaps 90-100. There we find the following:

> "Choose (χειροτονήσατε) then 'bishops' (ἐπισκόπους) and deacons worthy of the Lord, men who are gentle, disinterested, truthful and tried, because they fulfil among you the office of prophets and teachers. Do not, then, despise them, because they must be honoured by you with the prophets and teachers" (xv, 1-2; Denzinger, *Ench. Patr.* [1920], 9).

Though this passage does not advance us far on our present quest, it is useful to note that it does not square with theories of a natural and human origin for the priesthood. The quotation is from a popular manual for the faithful to whom designation of candidates is allowed. Χειροτονεῖν means "ordain" when said of superiors, but "elect" when said of inferiors. The "bishops" referred to are most probably only priests, as the plural episcopate is unknown to history, and as the ἐπίσκοποι of the New Testament are perhaps usually priests. The qualities required are reminiscent of those required by St. Paul in the epistles to Timothy and Titus. The candidates are to be "worthy of the Lord," be it noted, and not merely worthy of honour from the community, and they are to be reverenced *for their teaching*, as the prophets and teachers of old, not for their capacity for preserving order, which arises *aliunde*, from the respect due to

their office. This passage would suggest that the Apostles appointed and left in charge of the first communities those whom God had marked out by the charismatic gifts of prophecy and teaching.

The next classical place is from St. Clement of Rome (*I Cor.*, written between 96 and 98). There we read:

> "To the high priest his offices are given; to the priests a proper place is assigned; and their ministries are incumbent on the Levites. . . . The Apostles have preached to us from the Lord Jesus Christ; Jesus Christ from God. Christ, therefore, was sent by God, and the Apostles by Christ. . . . Preaching through countries and cities they appointed their first-fruits, having proved them by the Spirit, bishops and deacons of those who were to embrace the faith. [Then, after narrating the call of Aaron and his family to the priesthood of the Old Law, he continues:] So also our Apostles knew, through Our Lord, Jesus Christ, that contention would arise regarding the name (dignity, office) of the episcopate (ἐπισκοπῆς). That is why, having this perfect foreknowledge, they appointed the aforesaid, and ordered then that after their death other approved men should succeed them in their ministry (λειτουργίαν). Wherefore those who have been established by the Apostles or afterwards by other authorised persons, with the consent of the whole church . . . are not to be thrown out of their ministry without injustice" (*I Cor.* 40-44; Denzinger 19-21).

Again let us note that this passage gives no support to a popular and democratic origin of the priesthood. Instead it is derived through the Apostles from Jesus

Christ and from God the Father. Designation of the holders by the Church is recorded as in the previous passage. The dispute about the name of the episcopate was known beforehand to the Apostles by divine revelation, and is therefore met by appropriate measures taken by them to ensure the continuance of the Apostolic ministry. There is an indication of the threefold order as distinct from the laity, to which there is also a reference (omitted). It is a pity that there is an obscurity in the passage in the phrase "after their death." It is not clear whether the death of the Apostles is meant, or the death of the first-fruits whom the Apostles had made ἐπισκόπους.

In the *Shepherd* of Hermas (vis. iii, 5, 1) is an interesting but obscure reference to "the Apostles and bishops and teachers and deacons" (Denzinger, 84).

The many passages of the Epistles of St. Ignatius of Antioch are too long and too numerous to quote, but in them the full light breaks through. So clear and emphatic are they that the establishment of the monarchic episcopate has been attributed to him. Nothing could be further from the truth. The fact is that he presumes the unicity of the bishop in each place and his monarchic character as the basis of all his appeals for order and charity. He can conceive no other form of the episcopate. His theme in all his writings is the unity of the Church, and one notes how frequently he mentions the three superimposed grades together as a group counterbalanced by, and strictly marked off from, the laity. To the bishop he refers in the singular number; to the priests he often refers by the collective name, the presbyterate; and to the deacons he refers in the plural, but not by a collective name. The laity owe obedience to the bishop and presbytery, and

must be at one with them. The proof of their faith is their loyalty to the clergy. To him the unicity of the bishop in each place is an evident and necessary fact. Onesimus is sole bishop of Ephesus, Damas sole bishop of Magnesia, Polycarp sole bishop of Smyrna. During his own absence the church of Antioch will be without a bishop (*Rom.* ix, 1). The bishop has in his own hands all religious authority. The people must do *nothing* without him and the presbytery, just as Our Lord does nothing without His Father (*Magnes.* iii, 1). There must be no Eucharist without him or without his permission, no baptism, no agape (*Smyrn.* viii, 1-2). He represents the whole church over which he presides: it is all summed up, so to speak, in him. St. Ignatius receives the different churches and greets them all in the person of their respective bishops. "Where the bishop is, there must the faithful be, just as where Jesus Christ is there is the Catholic Church" (*Smyrn.* viii, 2). "Strive, therefore, to use one Eucharist, for there is one Flesh of our Lord Jesus Christ and one chalice in the unity of His Blood, and one altar, as there is one bishop with his presbytery and the deacons, my fellow servants" (*Phil.* 4).

From St. Ignatius onwards the stream runs clear as regards the number and mutual relations of the various grades of the hierarchy. It need cause no comment that these very early documents have little to say about the sacramental character of Holy Orders. Controversies on grace and the consequent development of the theology on the point are a much later occurrence, but the parallels which St. Ignatius employs leave no doubt of his views of the intrinsic sacredness of Holy Orders.

In those early times writers were more concerned to

maintain and inculcate practical respect and reverence and obedience towards the hierarchy than to explain the doctrine of grace. They were times of persecution. From the fourth century onwards express statements of the sacramental character of ordination abound. Moreover the point is well covered, as I have explained, by the terms of the ancient rituals and formularies, which would be well known to the early Christians. St. Gregory of Nyssa (*c.* 335-394) in his *Orat. in bapt. Christi* (Migne, P.G. xlvi, 581-2; Denzinger, 1062) writes of the power of human speech to change bread into the Body of Jesus Christ, to sanctify material things by a blessing and to transform the soul of a man in ordination into "something higher by an invisible force and grace." St. Chrysostom is, of course, the classical teacher of the sacramentality of the priesthood, and the prince of commentators thereon. It is worth while noticing, too, that St. Jerome, arguing against the Luciferians, and St. Augustine, arguing against the Donatists, are both able to make common ground with their adversaries on the sacramentality of ordination, and to draw therefrom an argument for the sacramental character of Baptism (See *Contra Lucifer.* no. 11, P.L. xxiii 166, and *Contra Epist. Parmeniani*, P.L. xliii 70). It is also one of those points of agreement between East and West which cannot easily be explained away, no matter how vehement the onslaught on it from the sixteenth century onwards. Durandus and Cajetan, denying the diaconate to be a sacrament, are solitary voices in a vast wilderness.

In what, it may be asked, does the superiority of the episcopate over the priesthood consist, and how far does it extend? Here we are implicated somewhat in the disputed question whether and how the episcopate

is a distinct sacrament from the priesthood. We must avoid this controversy absolutely for want of space. It requires a whole paper to itself if it is to be treated properly, and inadequate treatment would only tend to confusion. The question is still open, though opinion is crystallising in favour of the view that "the episcopate is an order properly so-called and distinct from the priesthood" (See Gasparri, *De sacra ordinatione* no. 21). The Council of Trent defined that bishops are superior to priests (Denzinger 960, 967). The priestly office is essentially the power to offer sacrifice, but it includes other functions besides in the Christian scheme. It includes the power of jurisdiction *in foro interno* in the sacrament of Penance, and *in foro externo* of ruling the flock as an associate of the bishop.

Over and above what is incumbent upon him in virtue of the Order he has received there are other functions laid upon him by the Church. Thus it happens that his "power of Order," as it is called—which is in general his power to perform sacred functions—is partly of divine origin and partly of human. The power of Order which is of divine origin is that which is conferred by those Orders which are truly sacramental; any other power he possesses is of human origin. That of divine origin consists principally in his ability to administer certain sacraments, an ability not possessed by those not ordained, or if possessed by them, as in the case of the diaconate, to the administration of which he and not they have been officially appointed. The chief power of Order which he possesses by divine right is his power of offering sacrifice and administering the Holy Eucharist. His "power of jurisdiction" is that by which he rules those subject to him, viz., those baptised and committed to his care,

whom he rules so far as their sanctification and attainment of eternal happiness are concerned. It is towards sanctification that the power of Order tends, and towards the care of souls that the power of jurisdiction is given. Both are productive of holiness, it is true, but men are not sanctified precisely so far as they are governed by their priests, but rather so far as they use their ministrations. The making of laws, as such, does not sanctify the subjects of those laws, but rather the administration of the sacraments. The power of Order does not depend for its valid exercise on the permission of the Church to use it, but the power of jurisdiction does. This latter in its wide sense includes the authority to bind and to loose, both in conscience and in external relation with the other members of the Church, as well as legislative, executive and coercive powers in general. As regards the power of forgiving sins it is the usual teaching that, considered incompletely and *in actu primo*, it is conferred by the Order of priesthood, but considered completely and *in actu secundo* it is conferred by the authority of the Church, which authority can take back what it has given. In a colloquial way we might say that ordination gives the ability to hear confessions, while the Church alone can make it possible for that ability to be validly exercised, in much the same way as the wisdom of a judge makes him able to deliver judgment, but it is his appointment by the Crown that gives his judgments "legal" value.

Both in relation to the power of order, and in relation to the power of complete jurisdiction theologians commonly teach that bishops are superior to priests by divine right. As regards their superiority in power of Order it would seem that that is defined with formal implicitness by the Council of Trent; for it defines that

the episcopate is of divine institution (Denzinger, 966), and then, among the powers belonging to it, it enumerates that of confirming (in the sense that bishops are officially deputed to this as a normal function) and of ordaining, which it says is not possessed in common with priests (Denzinger, 967). It clearly teaches, therefore, though without defining it, that bishops are by divine right superior to priests in the power of Order. The Council expressly abstained from defining that bishops are by divine right superior to priests in the power of jurisdiction, to avoid the inference that bishops receive their jurisdiction immediately from God and not from the Pope, a point about which there is still controversy. (See Grisar, *Disp. Tridentinae*, tom. I, p. 30 *et sqq.* and 88 *et sqq.*) By a bishop we mean, then, one who possesses and actually exercises fully or in part the fulness of the Christian priesthood. We do not, in this particular question, include those bishops who are not actually ruling a flock. We say that they have the full power of order and of jurisdiction (under the Sovereign Pontiff), in conscience as well as *in foro externo*, for the forgiveness of sins and the ruling of souls. This latter comprises legislative, judiciary and coercive power so far as it is needed for the care of souls. It includes also the power of "authentic teaching," for a bishop cannot rule his subjects well unless he proposes Christian doctrine to them for their guidance. The power of authentic teaching belongs to the bishop in virtue of his Order, and not in virtue of his personal knowledge, which is rather the means by which he will better discharge his functions as an authentic teacher. A bishop could not be excluded from an oecumenical council on the grounds of ignorance, for he teaches as a bishop rather than because he

is a clever man. Therefore, also, must his subjects accept his teaching, not of course with an irrevocable assent or under an absolute and unconditioned obligation, but nevertheless as an official expression of an official teacher.

The power of jurisdiction which bishops possess depends for its valid use on the authority of the Pope, who can deprive any one of them of the exercise of jurisdiction, but not all simultaneously, since he himself must rule in company with his college of bishops. The episcopate is a collegiate institution of divine origin and no one may change its nature.

Now therefore it is clear what we mean when we say that bishops are by divine right superior to priests in power of Order and jurisdiction. We mean that *the office* of the bishop, with jurisdiction both *in foro interno* and *in foro externo* with fulness of priestly Order, distinct from the Order of a priest and superior to it, is from God immediately. It is also of divine institution that priests are subject to bishops in the care of souls.

The first function of the episcopal office as such is to rule, as the present Roman form of consecration makes clear. For that he possesses the fulness of jurisdiction; but there has been on at least one famous occasion a tendency to stress his exclusive power of ordaining as the distinctive mark of his order. I refer to the noted remarks of St. Jerome which are often put forward against our teaching on the superiority of the episcopate over the priesthood. It is only natural that the power of ordaining should draw the attention of writers, including the Fathers, more readily than the ordinary power of governing, which is the more distinctive function of the episcopate. For by the power to ordain priests and consecrate bishops the episco-

pate provides for the continuity of the Church; while, as I have already pointed out, the power of sanctifying, of Order, will always claim a special importance in a society whose aim is to produce sanctity, an importance which will overshadow the mere power of jurisdiction and government by which, as such, men are not sanctified. Arius seems to have added to his other follies that of denying the superiority of the episcopate over the priesthood. His argument, according to St. Epiphanius, who takes him to task, was that both are of the same order of priesthood, have the same honour and the same dignity. "The bishop imposes hands," he says, "and so does the priest; the bishop celebrates the liturgy, so does the priest; the bishop sits on a throne, so does the priest." But the heresiarch does not point out, says St. Epiphanius, that there are differences. The priest sits on a lower throne than the bishop, he baptises indeed and celebrates the Eucharist, but only in the absence of the bishop or as his delegate; he imposes hands indeed in penance and confirmation, but never for ordination (i.e. as a sufficient rite without the imposition of the bishop's hands). Then he continues as follows:

> "How all that he says is full of stupidity every man of sense will perceive from the equality he establishes between the bishop and the priest. How can this equality be possible? The episcopal power is a generative power (for it begets fathers to the Church); the priestly power cannot beget fathers or masters to the Church, but only sons, in the baptism of regeneration. And how shall the priest occupy the seat of the presidency, he who cannot impose hands to ordain?" (*Haer.* lxxv, 3, 4. P.G. xlii, 505 *sqq.*)

Arius seems to have made very little stir with this particular thought, so opposed to ancient tradition, as we have seen from the Epistles of St. Ignatius. From the beginning, say the so-called *Apostolic Constitutions* (fourth century or perhaps a little earlier in composition, but professing to give the ancient discipline) it was recognised that neither a priest nor a deacon could ordain, and the same is said in the form of ordination found in the *Paradosis* (see above), probably by St. Hippolytus (*d.* 235). Novatian took care to be consecrated by three (ignorant) bishops.

With the exception of Arius nobody of importance[1] seems to have aired any other view than that which is now the current teaching of the Church until we reach St. Jerome, two passages of whose writings must now claim our attention for a few moments. The first is in the letter to Evangelus, and the second in his commentary on the *Epistle to Titus* (i, 5). The occasion of the Letter to Evangelus was that certain deacons of Rome had attempted to claim equality with the priests. Ambrosiaster had already dealt with them in his *Quaestiones Veteris et Novi Testamenti* (q. ci, *De Jactantia Romanorum Levitarum*). St. Jerome had heard of this work and conceived the idea of dealing with the question himself. His aim was to exalt the dignity of the priesthood and confound the pride of the deacons. Hence his tendency to minimise the differences between priests and bishops. Here are the two passages. The second is from his commentary on *Titus*.

(*a*) "That afterwards one of them [the priests] was elected to be over the others was done as a remedy for schism, lest each one drawing it [the

[1] After he became a Montanist Tertullian denied any divine origin to the hierarchy.

Church] to himself should destroy the Church of Christ . . . For what does a bishop do, excepting ordination, that a priest does not do? Priest and bishop, the one is a title of age and the other a title of dignity" (P.L. xxii, 1193-4).

(*b*) "The presbyter and the bishop therefore are the same. And before studies were made in religion by an instinct of the devil, the churches were governed by the common council of the presbyters. But after each one had begun to think that those he had baptised belonged to himself and not to Christ, it was decreed throughout the whole world that one elected from among the presbyters should be placed over the rest, to whom the whole care of the church should belong . . . . [He proves this from *Phil.* i, 1] Philippi is one of the cities of Macedonia, and certainly in one city there could not have been several bishops as they are [now] called. But since at that time they called them bishops whom we now call presbyters, he speaks indifferently of bishops and presbyters . . . Among the ancients presbyters and bishops were the same" (P.L. xxvi, 562-3).

At first sight it would seem that St. Jerome believed the episcopate to be of human origin, and its jurisdiction to be derived more from custom than divine institution. This is unfair, though, to St. Jerome. For he does admit that bishops alone can ordain, and he does not attribute that power to human origin. Therefore he holds that in power of Order bishops are, by virtue of ordination, superior to priests. He says that bishops are not to be found except one in each place, and that upon him rests the whole care of the Church, which is an admission of the monarchic episcopate. The bishop,

he says, has the power to appoint priests to the different places in their care (*"habent constituendi presbyteros per singulas civitates potestatem"*). He holds, then, that the bishop is superior to the priest *by right* in plenitude of Order, and *in fact* in plenitude of jurisdiction. It is in the explanation of the fact that he is a little vague. Elsewhere he tells us (*in Tit.* i, 5) that all bishops are directly or indirectly successors of the Apostles, because (*in Mt.* xxv, 26-28) the bishops have been instituted by the Apostles. There was a time, he says, when there was no distinction yet between bishops and priests. Here he is misled. He concludes that, because there is a synonymity of those *names* in the New Testament, there was no difference *in fact* between a bishop and a priest in New Testament times. That may be true. It may equally be false. In any case he admits that this state of things did not last long. It was ended even before the trouble with the followers of Apollo (*I Cor.* ii, 12), so that even the *de facto* episcopal superiority in jurisdiction has to be traced, according to the mind of St. Jerome, to Apostolic action. It is possible to argue, then, that even St. Jerome believed episcopal superiority in jurisdiction to be of divine origin, through the Apostles. (See article *Evêque* in the *Dictionnaire d'Apologétique.*) But even if we allow that he teaches that the change was made by ecclesiastical, and not Apostolic, authority, his error is not that he denies the superiority in jurisdiction of bishops over priests, but that he is wrong in the origin to which he traces it.

Here we must end the second part of our paper, hoping we have said enough to meet the needs of Presbyterians and Baptists and Wesleyans, who deny the distinction between bishops and priests, of Anglicans, who hold to the "historic episcopate" and orders,

without believing in the sacramental character of ordination, and of Liberal and Modernist teachers, to whom the whole hierarchy is but a human institution. But with so little space at our disposal, we have inevitably left many questions untouched.

### III: THE ESSENTIAL MATTER OF HOLY ORDERS

THERE can be no more important question than the sacrificial character of the priesthood of the New Testament. *Priest*, *altar*, and *sacrifice* are correlative terms in any language, at least till the refinements of controversy in the Reformation period made some men think otherwise. The priesthood of the old Law was a natural priesthood, a sacrificing priesthood, and it would be strange if the priesthood of the better Dispensation should be unnatural and less real. The analogous sacrifices of prayers and thanksgiving and the analogous "priesthood of all believers" are neither sacrifices nor priesthood in any real sense of the word. They may derive some right to the name where they are the concomitants of a true priesthood and sacrifice, but they have no claim to the title on their own merits. They demand a real priesthood and a real sacrifice to make any sense at all.

> "The priesthood of the laity is originally a Jewish idea. It is first mentioned in *Exod.* xix, 6, where the chosen people are called 'a kingdom of priests.' St. Peter applies it to all the faithful in the Catholic Church (*I Peter* ii, 5-9). It means that the laity in the Church have something of the priestly character, inasmuch as they have individually direct access to God, and stand in a special relation to him; they

offer the spiritual sacrifices of faith, love and prayer, and have a definite part in the Eucharistic Sacrifice, as well as in the other offices and devotions of the Church. Thus the priest is directed to say in every Mass, 'Pray, brethren, that my sacrifice and yours may be acceptable to God.' The Jewish people were, of course, in a similar position, though a far less privileged one.

It is perhaps hardly necessary to remark that the general and unofficial priesthood of the laity in no way interferes with the special position of the official priesthood. The Jews, though a 'kingdom of priests,' nevertheless required the ministrations of official priests, and the same thing is true of the Church . . . The distinction is the same as that between officers and privates in a regiment or army: all are not officers, but all are equally soldiers" (*Catholic Gazette*, July 1926, pp. 189-190).

In fact to praise an army by calling it "an army of officers" would have no sense unless there were some real officers in that army.

The proof that the Christian priesthood is a real sacrificing priesthood is bound up with the truth of the Holy Eucharist as a sacrifice. It will be impossible to go over it again here, but I desire to emphasise once more the importance of having this fact clear.[1] Otherwise we shall fail to understand how men can admit, as does Professor W. E. Addis, M.A., that "we may grant the Pope's contention that the Edwardine church had no belief in priests who offered in sacrifice the body and blood of Christ, or in bishops capable of ordaining such priests. We may grant further that the

[1] See *Catholic Faith in the Holy Eucharist.*

medieval offices have been deliberately altered to exclude this view" (*Encycl. Brit.* 4th ed. *Order, Holy*). To us that is a cardinal admission, giving away the whole case. But then the learned professor maintains that a sacrificing priesthood was not the belief of the primitive Church. Really whatever argument there is on the question of Anglican orders is here, on this very point of the nature of the priesthood. Once grant that the Christian priesthood is essentially sacrificial, and the case is ended, for there is not any tremendous difficulty, as Professor Addis sees, in accepting the papal interpretation of the Edwardine Ordinal, and the papal statement of the facts of the case. I do not mean by this that many intricate problems cannot be raised round the question of Anglican Orders in general. I mean that no very serious objection can be stated against the papal condemnation of them as invalid. One might write reams on whether Barlowe was a bishop, on the silly "Nag's Head" story, on textual comparisons between the Edwardine and other Ordinals, on the very vexed question of "re-ordination" in the third and fourth centuries and again between the tenth and eleventh centuries, on reasons why the Ordinal might have been condemned, on why contemporary Catholics in England condemned it, and so on. Those are questions with which I do not propose to deal. I propose merely to explain what actual reasons the Pope gives for condemning Anglican Orders in the Bull *Apostolicae Curae*, and I maintain that very little controversy is possible on that point, once it is admitted that the Christian priesthood is essentially a sacrificing priesthood. That is the fundamental question and no other.

It will have been explained already that a sacrament

is essentially a sign, efficient so far as it signifies, and signifying what it effects. The material indeterminate part of the sign is called the matter, which may be common to more than one sacramental and non-sacramental rite, as we have already seen to be the case with the imposition of hands. The determining part of the sign is called the form. Together these two things give us the essential nucleus of the sacrament, though it may be administered in a rite which includes much non-essential ceremony and prayers, etc. There is always a moral simultaneity in every valid sacrament between the use of the matter and the form; a moral simultaneity and not necessarily a physical one. Thus, in Baptism in ancient times an elaborate ceremonial accompanied the actual washing. It was not necessary that the pronouncing of the form "I baptise thee" should begin simultaneously with the actual washing. It was sufficient and is sufficient if the minister of the washing, at some moment during the actual washing, pronounced the form. So in Holy Orders, the form is usually in the prayer and preface which follows the imposition of hands. There is a great controversy about the essential matter of Order. Though it in no way affects the decision on Anglican Orders—the enquiry into them never having reached the stage where it would have been a practical question—it is sometimes thought that it had an influence on earlier decisions of the Holy See with regard to this matter. This view is not really tenable either.

There is only one rite mentioned for ordination in both the New Testament and the Fathers, and that rite is the imposition of hands, which we shall prefer to regard as the sole essential matter of Holy Orders. The question is not yet closed; witness the long article

in the *Dictionnaire d'Apologétique* (art. *Imposition des Mains*) in which Fr. Galtier maintains that the tradition of the instruments is in the West after the *Decretum pro Armenis* the essential matter for Holy Orders. It is a matter for some surprise that this view should be so strongly maintained to-day, for the trend of opinion is all in favour of the position we have adopted. The controversy has no practical effect on the validity of orders given by the Roman Pontifical, since that provides for proper regard being paid to all theories. It remains for us to give the reasons for our adherence to the imposition of hands as the sole essential matter. Besides the reason given above, we have the plain historical fact that the Eastern Churches have always used but one matter, the imposition of hands alone, and with the exception of the Armenians use no other to-day. The Armenian exception is admittedly due to the decree of Eugenius IV, the precise value of which is in question. The imposition of hands is professedly the only rite of Apostolic origin and therefore even in the West was regarded as the sole essential matter of orders till the beginning of the tenth century. About that time there appears in the Sacramentary of Noyon another rite called the *porrection* or *tradition* of the instruments, by which the bishop is ordered, after the anointing of the hands of the candidate for the priesthood, to give to him the paten and host and the chalice containing wine. Later it appears in other French and German sacramentaries, not always in the text, but sometimes as a marginal note. The usage spread to other Orders and in all parts. According to Hugh of St. Victor, Peter Lombard, and Pope Innocent III, it was because it was found apt to signify more precisely the power received. Theologians do not

agree about the Church's power to clarify and render more precise in meaning the rites by which a sacrament is administered, to make more precise and significative the sign by which the sacramental grace is given. Whatever be the truth about that, it is interesting to note that the three authorities mentioned above did not believe that the tradition of instruments was introduced so much for that purpose as to render more precise the meaning of a power already received.

There would seem to be no valid excuse for maintaining a different essential matter for Holy Orders in the West than that which prevails in the East, were it not for a clause in the Instruction appended to Eugenius IV's Decree for the Armenians commemorating their reunion with the Church at the Council of Florence [1438-1445]. The clause in the Instruction on the Sacraments is as follows:

> "The sixth sacrament is that of Order, the matter of which is the thing by whose delivery the Order is conferred: as, for instance, the Order of the presbyterate is conferred by the delivery of the chalice with wine and the paten with bread, of the diaconate by the giving of the book of the Gospels, of the subdiaconate by the giving of the empty chalice with the empty paten."

It is interesting to note that Eugenius calls his Instruction a *brevissima formula*. It is not a full treatise on the questions it discusses, but a very short summary and practically a *verbatim* transcript of an *opusculum* of St. Thomas Aquinas entitled *De Fidei Articulis et Septem Sacramentis*. St. Thomas is therefore its real author, and he leaves us in no doubt that he regarded the imposition of hands as being at least of equal importance

with the delivery of the instruments (*Sum. Theol.* iii, *sup.*, q.37, a.5, *in corp.*), for he says: "By the imposition of the hand the fulness of grace is given through which they are fitted for their great offices." This surely means the sacramental grace, though St. Thomas attributes to the delivery of the instruments the *collatio potestatis* and the impression of the priestly character.

The Instruction of Eugenius IV is not a definition but a practical instruction, admittedly of an authoritative character, on points of doctrine and discipline. One is inclined to say, though, that its authority has been much exaggerated. It has first of all its intrinsic merit as a work of the Angelic Doctor, to whom we may, however, attribute error more readily than to Eugenius IV, though Cardinal van Rossum does not hesitate to say "*erravit Eugenius IV.*" Then it has authority as a document emanating from the Sovereign Pontiff, but that authority except in definitions must always be carefully estimated from the circumstances. Knowing, as we do, that the Instruction is simply a transcription of a work by St. Thomas, we cannot pretend to think that the Pope intended it to have the authority of a document expressly drawn up for the case. There is, therefore, no parallel between the Instruction *pro Armenis* and the Bull *Apostolicae Curae*. The former has a general sanction such as any Pope would readily give to any writings of St. Thomas Aquinas, and in addition a kind of particular approval as a convenient and ready-at-hand document to meet the needs of the Armenians. The Bull *Apostolicae Curae* has a far greater authority. It was expressly drawn up to incorporate the findings of an *ad hoc* Papal Commission. Its approval is therefore not general and

cursory, but particular to each statement. Consequently we would say that the statement in the Instruction on the essential matter of Holy Orders is at least deficient so far as it omits the imposition of hands, and erroneous if it intends to exclude it. The latter seems very improbable indeed, since at the same Council the orders of the Greeks, given by the imposition of hands alone, were fully recognised, and Eugenius IV could not have been ignorant of the fact. False notions as to the authority of the Instruction *pro Armenis* and the consequent need of safeguarding its obvious meaning have probably done much to support the view that the Church has the power to render more precise the rites and forms of the sacraments, though eminent theologians hold that it is in any case the safer teaching.

Even if we grant such a power to the Church, we should agree with Palmieri that it could only be exercised by a solemn and infallible decree addressed to the whole Church (*De Rom. Pontifice*; *Prolegom. de Ecclesia*, par. 13 schol. iii) or else by a universal teaching act of the bishops of the whole Church in union with Rome. Neither of these is the case with the delivery of the instruments, which is to our mind a Western obfuscation of the primitive tradition, and a cloud already receding. We are beginning to pass out of the stage of controversy on this point, but so long as any serious doubt remains whether the delivery of the instruments is necessary in the West it will be our practice to re-ordain conditionally whenever it is found that that rite has been omitted.

## IV: ANGLICAN ORDERS

Divine revelation has been poured into human minds and memories, and not into pitchers, and it is therefore inevitable that the human mind should work on the meaning of the revelation given to it. It was intended that it should. At one period one truth will fascinate the minds of men more than another, and whole areas of truth will be, as it were, ignored for the problem of the moment. Not that any portion of the divine truth will ever be forgotten and lost. Far from it. "My words shall not pass away." But one question will become prominent in one century and another question in the next. Sometimes the Church takes whole centuries to make up her mind on the full implications of a revealed truth and to canonise such truths in a safe and sound form of words. Observe how long it took her to state the implications of the mystery of the Blessed Trinity in the simple form (simple now, to us) "one divine nature, three divine persons." How easy it is to say the word *transubstantiation*. How aptly it carries the meaning of the change of bread and wine in the Real Presence. Yet that word did not arrive in a day. It was first used in the eleventh century, and the Church pondered its fitness for five hundred years before she finally canonised it in the Council of Trent. After the Church has made up her mind there is no going back. She has staked out another claim in the area of the meaning of revealed truth, and she will not uproot her boundaries and give up her claim. Therefore let us distinguish three stages of development. The first stage is that of implicit belief, during which

the Church repeats from memory a particular revealed truth. The second stage is that in which she inquires about its meaning; in this stage we may find quite good and holy men who are not too clever at stating that meaning and others who strike us as particularly clever and apt. Then comes the third stage in which the Church definitely makes up her mind about the meaning and chooses a form of words to express it. The three stages embrace the whole process of development of dogma as Catholics understand it.

Now, it will be obviously unfair to expect thinkers and writers in the first stage to state the revealed truth with all the fulness of those in the third stage and after. They did not possess a form of words sufficiently clarified and settled to do so safely. Thus nearly all the very ancient prayers and doxologies have very little to say about the Holy Ghost. They mention Him in union with God the Father and God the Son, but they do not dilate about the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity as they do about the First and the Second. Equally it will be unfair to accuse writers of the first stage of holding a different faith from those of the third stage, since both equated their faith on the same principle, "I believe in the Holy Catholic Church," in all that she teaches and in all the logical implications of that teaching, whether known or as yet unknown. Thus, for instance, Catholics of to-day are not bound to an express belief in Our Lady as the Mediatrix of all graces. Perhaps nobody ever will be. Equally it is possible that future generations will come to see that that fact is implied in what we of to-day, and those of past generations, believe about Our Lady. Their faith will not be different from ours, for it will spring from the same source as ours and will be governed by

the same principle, which I have just enunciated. We of to-day are just as ready to believe it as they will be if the Church should teach it.

Writers of the second stage of inquiry and controversy who were loyal to the Church are entitled to the best construction of their words which charity and truth will allow. Nevertheless they may have to be dismissed as erroneous in their expressions. If they rebelled against the decision reached in the third stage their position is clear. They became heretics, and their views must be of mere historical interest.

So far, so good. What I wish to emphasise now is this. Once the third stage has been reached and the Church has issued a decision, we must be wary of people who then deliberately adopt the incomplete phrases and ideas which were current in the first stage. It may be a form of rebellion against the Church's decision. Thus, suppose I were always to omit from the Nicene Creed the formula "who proceedeth from the Father and the Son," I should become suspect of heresy and rightly so. It would not justify me if I maintained that I was saying it as St. Hilary said it and wrote it, which would be undoubtedly true. It would not justify me unless I made it clear that I unreservedly believed in the procession of God the Holy Ghost from God the Father and God the Son, and only preferred the ancient form of St. Hilary on account of its antiquarian flavour and interest. In that case the Church might tolerate me as a harmless freak. If, on the contrary, it were clear from my life and actions that I deliberately chose St. Hilary's less complete version because I did not believe in the procession of the Holy Ghost, the Church would rightly condemn me as a heretic while still continuing to keep

the feast of St. Hilary, because St. Hilary died professing belief in whatever the Catholic Church should propose for his belief, while I refused her credence on a point of her actual teaching.

Some of those who are dissatisfied with the Bull *Apostolicae Curae* make a verbal comparison between the Edwardine and other, primitive, forms which were used in the past and approved. They profess to find no difference. Here, as we shall see, they are wrong, but for the moment let that pass. Suppose there were no verbal differences. Does that mean that the Edwardine Ordinal ought to have been approved? From what I have said it is obvious that such a conclusion is not warranted. We must have it clear that the framers of the Edwardine Ordinal did not choose a primitive form in order to express their rebellion against a decision of the Church on a point raised long after the chosen primitive form was constructed. In other words we can presume the good faith of the framers of the primitive forms, since they died in the arms of the Church. We cannot *presume* the good faith of the framers of the Edwardine Ordinal. It must be proved. To hark back violently even to the most ancient forms is a thing requiring explanation. If it is done in ignorance, or if an incomplete ancient form or formula is continued in ignorance and good faith, all may yet be well; but if the change is made for the demonstrable purpose of rebelling against a decision reached after the date of the ancient form, we may be face to face with schism and heresy. What was mere *incompleteness* in the ancient form becomes *mutilation* when that form is adopted from a motive of rebellion. What was merely a *less complete sign*, in matters sacramental, in the mouths of the primitives, becomes a positively

*distorted sign* in the mouths of the moderns. And the sacraments effect only so far as they signify. If they are made to signify something diametrically opposite to what the Church teaches they lose their sacramental effect.

Ponder well on it; the sacraments are essentially signs. Suppose during the recent persecution in Mexico some poor distracted bishop in hiding had found it necessary to ordain a candidate to the priesthood without the help and guidance of his *Pontificale*, and relying solely on his memory to do it rightly. Let us suppose that he took a deacon, a fit and proper candidate, and said to him, imposing hands upon him, "Receive the Holy Ghost to be a priest in the Church of God." There we should have a case which many Anglicans erroneously think is on a par with what happened when the Edwardine Ordinal was introduced. It is obvious that the bishop has forgotten very much of the ceremony. Peace of a sort has come to Mexico, and so we can imagine the bishop sending to Rome to inquire, now that he knows how much he omitted, whether that ordination was valid.

It would be presumptuous of me to say what actually would be the decision of the Roman courts, but I may be allowed to surmise that they would hold that his omission of the words "to offer sacrifice for the living and the dead" and of "Whose sins you shall forgive," *etc.* was mere omission, not in itself destructive of the signifying power of the sacrament, which was retained in the use of the word "priest." It would be presumed, and could easily be proved if necessary, that he meant the word "priest" to cover the full Catholic meaning of the word, with all the powers contained in it in its Catholic meaning. Next it would

have to be settled whether his omission of the delivery of the instruments had invalidated the rite or not. That question would probably not be raised on the grand scale for a solitary and relatively unimportant case. It might have been raised on the grand scale at the inquiry into Anglican orders, but that inquiry never got as far as that. It broke down in the very first stage, as we shall see. So, in all probability, the Courts would take the current "safety first" view that our supposed Mexican priest had better be re-ordained conditionally on the grounds that the delivery of the instruments may be necessary in the West.

It now becomes necessary to show how different is the case of the Edwardine Ordinal from that imaginary case. But first let it be clear that the Bull *Apostolicae Curae* is not a treatise on the essentials of Holy Orders. Such it might indeed have become had the Ordinal emerged successfully from the first stage of the inquiry to the question how far the omission of the delivery of the instruments was deleterious. Neither was it sought by the Catholic bishops, as if they had been in doubt how to treat the question. The Catholic bishops of England were content to follow the three-hundred-and-fifty-years-old Roman tradition of absolute and unconditional ordination of convert Anglican ministers who wished to be Catholic priests. That tradition was contemporary in origin with the Edwardine Ordinal, and was both official and informed. It was begun by Cardinal Pole as papal legate when he sifted the whole matter at the time of the reconciliation of England to the Holy See under Queen Mary. The fresh inquiry was sought by prominent Anglicans who were working for reunion, and who found in the traditional Roman practice an obstacle to their work.

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Their request was granted, and English Catholics were only too pleased to further the inquiry once it was decided upon, and to advance it with thoroughness. See the *Church Times* of April 24th, 1896, for a cordial tribute from the other side to the impartiality and thoroughness with which the earlier stages were conducted. It is safe to say that the same methods were faithfully followed to the end.

When the Bull says that the Edwardine Ordinal is deficient "in form and intention" what does it mean? It means that the Pope has decided, among other things, (*a*) that the Christian priesthood is essentially a sacrificing priesthood; (*b*) that Cranmer and his assistant framers of the Edwardine Ordinal expressly rejected that concept of the priesthood; (*c*) that they chose that particular form and ceremony for the administration of Holy Orders—wherever they may have found it—for the express purpose of embodying their repudiation of a sacrificing priesthood; (*d*) that they did effectually repudiate that concept of the priesthood—their plans were successful; (*e*) that therefore they rendered indeterminate the significance of the rite and ceremony by excising an essential element of it; (*f*) that those who used the new form made by Cranmer and his friends must be presumed to have intended to give by it what it was framed to give, *viz.*, a non-sacrificial ministry; (*g*) that a non-sacrificing minister is not a Catholic priest, whatever else he may be (and that last matter does not concern the Church); (*h*) that therefore those ordained by the Edwardine Ordinal are not Catholic priests or deacons, and *a fortiori* not bishops.

I hope I have not simplified this to the point of tediousness, for it is not a difficult case to follow in

itself, if it were not for the smoke-screens that have been laid all round the question by those who have not studied the Papal reply carefully enough. We can proceed to examine their various statements and the evidence for them.

> "The case on behalf of the Anglican Ordinal broke down in the very first stage . . . The first point to be ascertained in reference to the Anglican Ordinal was whether it contained at least some combination of ceremony and accompanying form so constructed as to signify definitely the sacramental grace to be imparted. . . . It was the only point that proved to need investigation, since its investigation terminated in the unhesitating conclusion that the Anglican rite did not satisfy even that elementary requirement. Had the Anglican rite, however, passed successfully through this initial stage, by proving itself to bear a definite signification, it would have become necessary to inquire, in the next place, whether it fulfilled the further requirement of embodying its definite signification in that precise matter and form which had the sanction of Our Lord's positive appointment. And here the Instruction *pro Armenis* would have had to be considered along with the question whether Our Lord Himself fixed *in specie*, as the theologians say, the matter and form of this sacrament, or whether He merely promised to ratify the determination of His Church." (*A Vindication of the Bull "Apostolicae Curae" by the Cardinal Archbishop and Bishops of the Province of Westminster. In reply to the letter addressed to them by the Anglican Archbishops of Canterbury and York.* Longmans, 1898. Appendix II, p. 87.)

There must have been adverse evidence of enormous weight if it could not be shown that the Anglican Ordinal contains "at least *some* combination of ceremony and accompanying form so constructed as to signify definitely the sacramental grace to be imparted." It will perhaps hardly be credited that the adverse evidence could be so strong, but let us be patient and see. First of all let us recall that Cranmer was not a modern High Church bishop with a sincere desire to be as "Catholic" as possible. He was, on the contrary, an apostate Catholic bishop, who bitterly denounced many things believed by the church of his baptism and ordination, as well as the Church itself. He must have had some motive for changing the forms of worship and the Ordinal which had been previously used, and it ought to be possible to find out what that intention was from his life and actions and writings. His Ordinal was issued in 1549, re-issued in 1552 with changes unimportant for our present purpose, and remained in use unchanged for a hundred and ten years, till 1662. Here are the essential forms for the three orders as they stood 1552-1662.

| Diaconate | Priesthood | Episcopate |
|---|---|---|
| Take thou authority to execute the office of a deacon in the church of God committed unto thee: In the name of the Father, *etc.* | Receive the Holy Ghost. Whose sins thou dost forgive they are forgiven; and Whose sins thou dost retain they are retained; and be thou a faithful dispenser of the word of God and of His Holy Sacraments: In the name of the Father, *etc.* | Take the Holy Ghost, and remember that thou stir up the grace of God which is in thee by imposition of hands, for God hath not given us the Spirit of fear, but of power and love, and soberness. Give heed unto reading, exhortation and doctrine. Think upon |

| Diaconate | Priesthood | Episcopate |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Take thou authority to read the gospel in the church of God, and to preach the same, if thou be thereunto ordinarily commanded. | Take thou authority to preach the word of God and to minister the Holy Sacraments in this congregation, where thou shall be so appointed. | these things contained in this book; be diligent in them, that the increase coming thereby may be manifest unto all men. Take heed unto thyself, and unto teaching, and be diligent in doing them: for by doing this thou shalt save thyself, and them that hear thee. Be to the flock of Christ a shepherd, not a wolf; feed them, devour them not: hold up the weak, heal the sick, bind together the broken, bring again the outcasts, seek the lost. Be so merciful that you be not too remiss; so minister discipline that you forget not mercy that when the Chief Shepherd shall come, ye may receive the immarcescible crown of glory through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. |

The imposition of hands is the determinable part of the rite, vague in itself and equally applicable to confirmation. The form should render precise what is meant by it, when used for Holy Orders. Only the form for the diaconate determines the meaning of the imposition of hands. To concentrate on the two that matter, the forms for the priesthood and the episcopate: "Receive the Holy Ghost" and "Take the Holy Ghost" do not determine: they would do for Confirmation. "Whose sins," *etc.* do not determine it to

the priesthood, since the power to forgive sin is not the essential priestly power, but only an accessory power. "Be thou a faithful dispenser . . . of his Holy Sacraments" do not determine it to the priesthood: they might be said to a deacon. There is nothing to determine the imposition of hands for the episcopate. Neither for the one nor for the other is there even a mention *either of the office to be conferred or of its special grace and power*. Notice carefully the disjunctive. It would have perhaps guided the Anglican Ordinal safely through this preliminary stage of the inquiry if only these few words, added in 1662, had been there from the beginning: (for the priesthood) "Receive the Holy Ghost *for the office and work of a priest in the Church of God* now committed unto this by the imposition of our hands," *etc.*, and (for the episcopate) "Receive the Holy Ghost *for the office and work of a bishop in the Church of God* now committed unto thee," *etc.* Or if some mention of the distinctive grace and power of the two Orders had been inserted the same purpose would have been served. In all Ordinals for which the approval of the Catholic Church has been claimed either the office, or else its grace and power, is mentioned in the form, the unapproved Abyssinian form being the only one similar to the Anglican. The long address to the bishop in the Edwardine form would be just as suitable if read to a priest, and there is no reason for thinking that they are the words, or at any rate the only words, by which St. Paul gave the episcopate to Timothy. They have no exclusive historical connection with the giving of the episcopate, such as would have told us that that was the implication in using them here.

If either the name of the office or its grace and power had been mentioned in the Edwardine forms the

Ordinal would probably have escaped the censure of being "deficient in form," but the enquiry would not have been over. There would still have remained the necessity of proving that the names *priest* and *bishop* were meant in their Catholic sense. That could not have been *presumed*, because Cranmer's changing of the Ordinal was in itself a suspicious act, and he would have to be cleared of the suspicion. Supposing that he had, for instance, adopted *verbatim* the forms in the Leonine Sacramentary, which mention clearly only the names of the offices, he would still have been under suspicion. The reason is that later forms and ceremonies than the Leonine had become ever more explicit about the sacrificial power of the priesthood, and to hark back to more primitive ones lays one open to the suspicion of wanting to deny the later developments ; remember all that we have said on p. 206 on this point. Anyway as things stood it was clear that the Anglican forms of 1552 were deficient, and, even if used by bishops validly consecrated in the beginning, must be regarded as insufficient and casting very grave doubt indeed upon the validity of the orders conferred by them. The changes of 1662 can have no bearing on the question, as the succession must have been dead by then even if the first Anglican bishops enjoyed valid Orders. I do not care to say that they would have been certainly invalid from the defect of form alone, since Pope Leo XIII rejected them on the grounds of double defect of "form and intention," but I strongly incline to the view that the defect of form alone might have proved decisive.

However, it was open to the defenders of Anglican Orders to reply to all this that the deficiency of form was removed by the whole complex of the rite. It was

obvious, it might be urged, that the candidates came to receive a particular Order, those not deacons to be made deacons, deacons to be made priests, priests to be made bishops. The publication of the ceremony made it clear what was intended to be done. Surely, it may be said, a man does what he means to do. If he goes into his cathedral for the known purpose of holding an ordination ceremony and candidates who are known to be deacons appear before him and he does not make bishops of them, surely it is obvious that he meant to make them priests; and therefore the defect of form is not really so decisive as it would appear. Moreover the forms are called in the Ordinal the forms for making deacons, priests and bishops, and the formularies of the Anglican Church profess a belief in those three offices in a Christian sense.

The first answer to this would be that it is not enough. To prepare the font for baptism, to bring in a baby to be baptised, to publish the fact that at such a time baptism will be conferred, is not enough to secure baptism for the baby. It still remains absolutely essential to wash it with water in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, because the sacraments are signs and effect only what they signify. Whatever is excised from their signification is excised from their effect, and if the washing is excised or omitted completely the sacramental effect is not given. No essential omission can be excused, much less a deliberate excision. Though God is not tied to the sacraments, and might be thought to provide for unknown cases, where something essential has been omitted in good faith, yet it would render the institution of the sacraments nugatory if we were to expect Him to confer His sacramental graces where men have

tampered with the signs He instituted, changing their meaning, or where they have neglected to use them through indifference or malice. He has not revealed to us any non-sacramental plan, and we cannot presume on His mercy. So the second answer will be that, far from removing the defect of form, the *whole complex* of the Edwardine rite forces us to enquire what Cranmer and his assistants meant by the names *deacon*, *bishop* and *priest*. Here we touch the defect of intention.

It is abundantly clear from history that they did not mean what the Catholic Church means and expressly taught even at that time. They did not mean "sacrificing" priests and bishops. A comparison between the Catholic rite, as it was prescribed and used in England and on the Continent at the time of the Reformation, and Cranmer's new Ordinal, which supplanted it, brings out clearly the fact that every sacrificial phrase and formula was cut out. The same result is obtained by comparing the Book of Common Prayer with the Missal. How many times does this occur?

> "Taking the Ordinal with its natural accompaniment, the Communion Service, corresponding to the Missal and Pontifical which they replaced, *there are forty distinct cases of deliberate suppression* of anything which would indicate a sacrifice of the Mass or of a sacrificial Priesthood empowered to offer it" (Moyes, "The Mass and the Reformation" in *The Nineteenth Eucharistic Congress*, p. 46).

Sixteen of these "suppressions" relate to the Ordinal, and twenty-four to the Book of Common Prayer. It is sometimes said that they were directed against theological exaggerations or abuses introduced in the Middle

Ages, but then surely the more Cranmer wished to emphasise his protest against abuses the more clear he ought to have been about the truth. That is the normal and natural course. Only a lunatic would carry his protest against an abuse so far as to remove altogether the legitimate and necessary use of a thing. Nobody tries to mend a thing by destroying it altogether, and if Cranmer had been anxious to retain a pure concept of the sacrificial power how easily he could have done it! One sentence would have sufficed, such as "Receive the Holy Ghost to be a priest in the Church of God with power to offer truly." There is no such sentence anywhere to compensate for those forty suppressions, for which the true name is *excisions*. A man does not forget or accidentally miss the very same thing forty times over. No, they are excisions, and that is an important point to notice, for what a man excises, he repudiates, and therefore Cranmer effectively repudiated sacrifice as a property of his new priesthood.

Modernist and Evangelical members of the Church of England find no difficulty in admitting this to be the true interpretation of Cranmer's action. Thus, for instance, Bishop Knox, writing in *The National Review*, September 1925, says:

> "The Pope's refusal to recognize the validity of the Orders was absolute, and was grounded on the fact that our Church does not ordain priests to offer the Sacrifice of the Mass. In spite of the attempt made by our Archbishops to conceal this defect, the Pope, from his point of view, was unquestionably right. It is true that certain priests of the Church of England offer so-called Masses, but as they were not ordained by the Church with the intention that

they should offer the Body and Blood of Christ to the Father, the Sacrament of their Ordination is, for this purpose, a failure. The Prayer Book and Ordinal are simply un-Catholic, since they show no sign of fulfilling the most important of all Catholic functions.

"If the Sacrament of Orders is administered without the intention of ordaining priests to offer sacrifices, the persons ordained are not priests at all. *We have here not a question of some imperfectly instructed bishop. We are concerned with the purpose and object of a Church.*

"No one reading the Roman Ordinal can doubt that it is full of the intention of ordaining sacrificing priests. No one reading the English Ordinal can suspect that it has any such object. It clearly expresses some power of Absolution; it definitely expresses administration of a sacrament. But of sacrifice there is not a single word from first to last. Nor is there in the consecration of a bishop a hint that bishops are to ordain sacrificing priests." [Italics mine.]

His Lordship might have added that during the vital first century of its use there was not in the form contained in the Ordinal even a nominal mention of the office to be conferred. Then the case would have been complete. The old saying of a Protestant divine that "it was not the Prayer Book that was taken out of the Mass, but the Mass that was cut out of the Prayer Book" represents the very truth of the case; and as the *Church Times* (October 23, 1925) puts it, "to cut out is a more significant action than to refrain from putting in." I have explained how much more significant

when dealing with the imaginary case of the Mexican bishop. The whole sacrificial idea was being denounced in unmeasured terms by the Reformers in France and Germany at the time, as Cranmer was well aware. Why, then, if he wished to preserve it in its pure and pristine form, did he not insert at least one clear sentence in his Ordinal and Prayer Book instead of doing what must obviously put him in line with his French and German fellows?

I have not yet referred to the confirmatory evidence from Cranmer's theological writings, and those of his assistants, which exists in abundance, to prove that he did really repudiate the sacrificial priesthood. Cranmer's *A Defence of the True and Catholic Doctrine concerning the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ* leaves no doubt about the state of his mind. He is as thorough as the case allows him to be and he sweeps away not merely the notion of sacrifice itself, but also the doctrines of Transubstantiation and the Real Presence, upon which it rests. In the Preface the following occurs:

> "What availeth it to take away beads, pardons, pilgrimages, and such other like Popery, so long as two chief roots remain unpulled-up? Whereof so long as they remain will spring again all former impediments of the Lord's harvest and corruption of His flock. The rest is but branches and leaves . . . but the very body of the tree, or rather the roots of the weeds, is the Popish doctrine of transubstantiation, of the Real Presence of Christ's Flesh and Blood in the Sacrament of the Altar (as they call it), and of the Sacrifice and Oblation of Christ made by the priest for the salvation of the quick and the

dead. Which roots, if they be suffered in the Lord's vineyard, they will overspread all the ground again with the old errors and superstitions."

On the doctrine of the True Sacrifice he has the following:

"All such priests as pretend to be Christ's successors in making a sacrifice of Him, they be His most heinous and horrible adversaries. For never no person made a sacrifice of Christ, but He Himself only. . . For what needeth any more sacrifices if Christ's sacrifice be perfect and sufficient? . . . Wherefore all Popish priests that presume to make every day a sacrifice of Christ either must they make Christ's sacrifice vain, unperfect and unsufficient, or else is their sacrifice in vain which is added to the sacrifice, which is already of itself sufficient and perfect" (*A Defence, etc.* Parker Society's edition, p. 348).

As if to disprove the notion that he was tilting at the windmills of abuse and not at the true sacrificial doctrine, he goes on to show in detail that he is writing against the recognised doctrine of the Catholic Church, against the truth:

"But it is a wondrous thing to see what shifts and cantels the Popish antichrists devise to colour and cloke their wicked errors. . . For the Papists, to excuse themselves, do say that they make no new sacrifice, nor none other sacrifice than Christ made (for they be not so blind but they see that then they should add another sacrifice to Christ's sacrifice, and so make this sacrifice unperfect); but they say that they make the self-same sacrifice for sin that Christ

made Himself. And here they run headlong into the foulest and most heinous error that ever was imagined."

To Cranmer priest and layman are equal in power. Public order and its needs alone place the former over the people, to rule them, instruct them and lead them in prayer (*op cit.* p. 350). His answer to Henry VIII's question in 1540, on the absence of grace in the ministry, is well known (Stillingfleet MSS. xxi, i ; Lambeth, 1108, fol. 71).

Owing to the doctrinal changes which he introduced, and which were accepted, it became possible for Parliament to declare mere attendance at Mass a crime, and a Popish priest entering the realm to be guilty of high treason. "Every person who shall wilfully hear Mass shall forfeit the sum of one hundred marks [about £200 of our money] and shall be imprisoned for a year" (23 Eliz. c.1, s.4, 9, 10, 11, anno 1571). In 1585 it was enacted: "No Jesuit or Popish priest shall come into or be in the realm on pain of high treason." This latter statute was no dead letter. Many priests were put to death under it, in whose happiness we now rejoice.

Is further comment necessary? Perhaps just this: some may feel that Cranmer bungled what he set his hand to do, that somehow or other he still left sufficient signification in his Ordinal to preserve its sacramental power, and that in spite of himself. For us Catholics that is precisely a matter to submit to the authoritative judgment of the Church, and one which, from its very nature, she must be fully competent to judge. If she cannot say whether or not certain orders are valid she is not fitted for her task. Her judgment was

sought on this very matter and delivered as "a final and irrevocable judgment—*perpetuo firmam, ratam et irrevocabilem*" (Pope Leo XIII to the Cardinal Archbishop of Paris). We know that he had hoped the result of the enquiry would be different, and his answer was given more in sorrow than in scorn. It was a reiteration of the contemporary Roman tradition embodied in the instructions to Cardinal Pole, to disregard as deficient in form and intention all Orders conferred according to the Edwardine Ordinal; and we know that those instructions were meticulously carried out (See *A Vindication, etc.*, pp. 1-19). The whole question was gone into again in what is known as the Gordon case of 1704, which was decided in the same sense and for the same reason—deficiency of form and intention, and not omission of the delivery of the instruments. (See *A Vindication* pp. 19-23). It cannot be claimed then that Rome has not been well-informed on the matter.

It should be clear now what I meant when I said that in all ordinals, primitive or more recent, which the Church has approved, there is a definite signifying power in the form. Either the functions and power of Order, or its grace, or else express mention of the office to be conferred, occurs in of all them. The latter (mention of the office alone) is sufficient only when we know it to have been used in good faith, and this can be safely presumed in the case of those who lived and died as good Catholics. Cranmer did not even preserve the name of the office, but even had he done so the evidence of his bad faith and that of his contemporaries is overwhelming. Morini says of the Roman Pontifical in its different editions, ancient and modern (and what he says applies to pre-Reformation Eng-

land where the Pontificals were but editions of the Roman one):

> "We deem it necessary for the reader to know that the modern Roman Pontifical contains all that was in the earlier Pontificals; but that the earlier Pontificals do not contain all that is in the modern Roman Pontifical. For various pious and religious reasons some things have been added in the recent Pontificals which are lacking in all the ancient editions. And the more recent the Pontificals are the more these (additions) obtrude themselves. . . . *But this is a wonderful and impressive fact, that in all the ancient, more modern, and contemporary, there is ever one form of Ordination as regards both words and ceremony, and the later books omit nothing which was in the older. Thus the modern form of Ordination differs neither in word nor in ceremony from that used by the ancient Fathers.* (Morini, *De Sacris Ordinationibus*, pt. iii, p.10. By "form" Morini here means the combination of words and ceremony which constitute the essential part of the sacramental rite.)

What Morini says of the Western Pontificals might be said of the Eastern ones likewise, at least certainly of those used by Uniates, and indeed by all others that are at all well-known and common. The Abyssinian Ordinal alone is like the Anglican, inasmuch as the form for the priesthood at least is quite indeterminate. The Abyssinian form was not approved, though the contrary has sometimes been alleged (See *A Vindication, etc.* p. 89. App. III).

# VIII

## MATRIMONY (DOGMATIC THEOLOGY)

By the Rev. G. H. Joyce, S.J., M.A.

All must, I think, recognize it as a remarkable fact that in every part of the globe the different races of mankind have treated marriage as an act of religion and surrounded it with religious rites. Reason itself seems to prescribe that the contract between man and woman the primary purpose of which is to give existence to beings with an immortal destiny, should receive a supernatural sanction and be ratified by a Divine benediction. Where marriage is destitute of any religious character, we have a sure indication that the condition of a people is one of gross savagery or that the decay of its civilization has set in. Among the Jews there was a further reason why marriage should be regarded as sacred, for with them the birth of children was conceived, not as the mere continuance of the human family, but as the increase of God's people, the multiplication of those to whom alone among men it was given to preserve for humanity the knowledge of the true God (*Tobit.* viii, 9).

Our Blessed Lord raised marriage to a new plane. The Gospels tell us how He renewed in express terms the law of indissolubility, long fallen into abeyance. But He did more than this. The Catholic Church tells

us that He made Matrimony one of those seven channels of grace which we call sacraments: that the rite of marriage is at once a sign and a cause of grace thereby conveyed to the soul. In the present paper I propose, first of all, to say something of this doctrine, and of the proofs from Scripture and Tradition by which it is established.

The symbolism of Matrimony is gathered from Scripture. The union between man and wife is representative of the union between Christ and the Church. That union is seen first in the mystery of the Incarnation. By His assumption of our nature the Son of God linked mankind to Himself by an inseparable tie. And the alliance thus formed is the root and ground of that which binds Him to the Church. For the Church, as the New Testament assures us again and again, is the Body of Christ, mystically incorporated with Him, and united to Him by a bond as perpetual as that of the Incarnation itself. In virtue of that union with the Church Christ is bound to every one of His members by ties so close that conjugal affection alone affords a term of comparison. In various passages of Scripture the relation of Christ to the Church and to the individual soul, is described as that borne by the bridegroom to the bride. In the *Apocalypse* (xxi, 2), St. John sees the Church as "the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband." St. Paul addressing the local church of Corinth, writes: "I espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ" (*II Cor.* xi, 2). And elsewhere he points out the analogy between the physical union which makes man and woman one flesh, and the far higher and more intimate bond between God and the

bride-soul, in virtue of which "he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit" (*I Cor.* vi, 7).

The doctrine finds its fullest expression in the well known verses of the fifth chapter of St. Paul's letter to the Ephesians, in which he sets before Christian husbands and wives their reciprocal obligations. The great majority of Catholic theologians hold that the passage furnishes adequate Scriptural proof that Matrimony is a sacrament in the full sense of the word, though the sacramental character of marriage is not directly stated, but indirectly conveyed. The critical verses run as follows:

> "Wives [be subject] to your husbands as to the Lord, because the husband is the head of the wife as Christ too is head of the Church, Himself being the saviour of the body. As, then, the Church is subject to Christ, so also wives [should be subject] to their husbands in everything. Husbands love your wives, as Christ also loved the Church and gave Himself up for her sake . . . .No man ever hated his own flesh; he loves and cherishes it, even as Christ the Church: because we are members of His body. 'For this shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife, and the two shall come to be one flesh.' The mystery here is great—I mean in reference to Christ and the Church" (*Eph.* v, 21-25, 29-31).

The Apostle explains that marriage between Christians has for its archetype the union between Christ and His mystical Bride, the Church, and that just as Christ and the Church are, by reason of that union, comparable to the head and the body in a single person, so the same comparison holds good also of husband and wife.

From the archetype the two partners may gather their respective duties in the Christian home. To enforce his teaching the Apostle cites from *Genesis* the words in which Adam declares that the bond between man and wife is stronger and closer than any other human relationship. Adam's words in their original context explain the superior strength of the conjugal tie from the origin of Eve. "She shall be called woman because she was taken out of man: wherefore [because she was formed from man] a man shall leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife." But when St. Paul cites the words, he makes them explain the extraordinary closeness of the tie in another way, and attribute it to the mysterious truth he has just set forth, that the bond between Christian partners has for its norm the union between Christ and the Church. "We are members," he says, "of His body. For this [because we are members of His body] shall a man leave father and mother and shall cleave to his wife." Where Christians are concerned a new cause is operative. Man and wife are supernaturally united in virtue of the sacred symbolism which their marriage contains. They are one as Christ and the Church are one. And the Apostle concludes with the declaration that Christian marriage is a sublime mystery when viewed in its relation to its archetype, the union between the divine Bridegroom and His Spouse the Church.

The teaching here given supplies us with ground for our argument. Christian marriage, St. Paul tells us, is a union similar to that between Christ and the Church. If this be so, it must be far more than a merely natural union. It must be a union effected by means of sanctifying grace. The espousals by which Christ is joined to His mystical Bride are realized

through grace. Apart from grace there can be no union between Him and man. The nature which He assumed in the Incarnation was humanity elevated by grace. And only through grace can man be grafted into Him and incorporated into the true Vine. Hence the whole doctrinal content of the passage compels the conclusion that in Christian marriage the union is cemented by grace.

It remains to show that this grace is mediated by an appropriate sign. It is often objected that our Lord instituted no external rite for marriage. This is true. But the marriage pact postulates an outward expression of consent on both sides, and thus of its own nature supposes a visible sign. This was accepted by our Lord as sufficient. So far as the generality of men are concerned, this expression of consent is significant of the permanent state which it introduces, and of this alone. But as given within the Church, it signifies also the grace, which, as we have seen, is annexed to that state. We may therefore rightly say that St. Paul's teaching implies the sacramental value of marriage.

It will be seen that Christian marriage contains a double symbolism. As a sacramental rite, it symbolises the sanctifying grace which it confers. Unless it did this, it would not satisfy the definition of a sacrament. But it also symbolises the union between Christ and the Church. This symbolism is present in a marriage in virtue of the mere contract. But it finds its fullest expression in consummated marriage. Only when man and woman are in fact made one flesh do they represent most perfectly the indissoluble bond by which the Son of God is joined alike to His physical and to His mystical body.

The teaching of the Fathers is in all respects similar

to that of Holy Scripture. We must not look to them for a theological treatment of this question. The theology of the patristic age was hardly at all concerned with the sacraments, but with the great fundamental doctrines of the Trinity, the Incarnation and Original Sin; sacramental doctrine was implicit in Christian practice. But we can point to a series of passages, in which the Fathers make it clear that for Christians marriage has been entirely transformed: that it has been elevated to the supernatural order, and is no longer a civil but a religious rite. They assure us: (1) that our Lord attached a special blessing to Christian marriage;(2) that in virtue of that blessing it involves a special gift of grace; (3) that just as the symbolic rite of baptism has an effect which is ineffaceable, so the symbolism of marriage renders it indissoluble; (4) that by reason of its sacred character it falls within the province of the Church. To say that Matrimony is a sacrament is merely to render explicit what is already contained in such teaching as this. One step only remained to be taken—to draw the conclusion that Matrimony is not merely the occasion but the instrumental cause of the grace received, and thus stands on the same footing as Baptism and the other rites which the Church recognises as sacraments.

This step was taken as soon as theological discussion began to centre on the subject. The great theologians of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries were largely occupied with the doctrine of the sacraments. The data afforded by Scripture and Tradition were scrutinised: and the truths necessarily involved in the Church's immemorial practice were formulated. The content of revelation was thus rendered explicit. A

great advance was made when Peter Lombard defined a sacrament as being a sign of grace of such sort that it both symbolises the invisible gift of grace, and causes what it symbolises: and further proceeded accurately to distinguish the seven sacraments of the Church from all her other ceremonies. Theologians readily recognised that his definition accurately expressed the distinctive character of those sacred rites which the Church held to be divinely instituted sources of sanctification to the recipients, and that the seven which he had named alone satisfied its terms.[1]

Since the days of the Reformation it has been customary for Protestant writers to assert that the Catholic doctrine of the sacrament of Matrimony arose purely and simply from the fact that the Scholastic theologians, being ignorant of Greek, attributed a wrong meaning to the Vulgate text *sacramentum hoc magnum est.* I think I have shown that Christian tradition provided medieval churchmen with solid grounds for holding Matrimony to be a sacrament, quite apart from any argument drawn from the words in question.

Indeed it seems worth while to mention that the first great Scholastic writer to elaborate the doctrine of Matrimony as a sacrament, the twelfth-century theologian Hugh of St. Victor, is careful to point out that the term as employed in this text denotes the symbolism in virtue of which marriage affords a representation of the union between Christ and the Church, and

[1] Peter Lombard himself, while reckoning Matrimony as a sacrament, placed it on a somewhat lower plane than the other six. He urged that its function was to save men from the commission of sin rather than to confer additional sanctification upon them. It was unanswerably replied that it is the same grace which enables a man to resist sin and which increases sanctity: and that the special function of marriage as the *remedium concupiscentiae* affords no ground for doubting that it gives sanctifying grace.

that this is not the symbolism which makes it one of the Church's sacraments.[1]

We shall now pass to another subject of primary importance, the relation of the contract and the sacrament in Christian marriage. Is it possible for two baptised Christians to form a marriage which shall not be a sacrament, or are the two so entirely identified that if there be a marriage between Christians that marriage must of necessity be a sacramental union? The unhesitating reply of the Church is that the two are inseparable: for Christians, Christ elevated the contract so that it should be for them a sacrament also; so that whenever two baptised persons contract a valid marriage, they receive the sacrament of Matrimony, while if their union be such as to preclude the reception of the sacrament, it cannot be marriage at all.

This is no mere academic question, but one with important practical consequences. For it was one of the fundamental positions of the rationalist political philosophy which prevailed during the nineteenth century that the religious element in Matrimony is a pure accessory; that essentially marriage is a contract, and as such falls under the regulation of the State; that consequently it belongs to the State to decide which unions are valid marriages and which not; and that, provided the State laws on the subject are observed, the man and woman are really married. It is not too much to say that most non-Catholics in English-speaking countries accept this view of marriage. Indeed, in the colony of New Zealand the legislature has made it a penal offence to call in question the validity of a marriage recognized by the State. On the

[1] *De Sacramentis*, lib. ii, p. xi, c.3.

other hand, the Catholic Church rejects this account of the matter as altogether erroneous. She teaches that where the sacraments are concerned, she alone can speak with authority. In this province the State has no power, for the simple reason that the State cannot give sacramental value to what is no sacrament. Hence, since in Matrimony the contract and the sacrament are identical, it must belong to the Church to determine all that relates to the validity of the bond. She, and she alone, can decide whether a proposed union is possible or impossible: and, if actually entered on, whether it be marriage or unlawful cohabitation Many readers will doubtless have noticed that in the Concordat made this year between the kingdom of Italy and the Holy See the provisions regarding marriage are on these lines. Religious marriage carries with it full civil effects: and the ecclesiastical courts have sole competence over nullity cases, the sentence of the Segnatura being accepted as definitive by the civil tribunals. The system in use in Spain is closely similar.

It would be altogether impossible within the limits of the time at my disposal to treat this point historically, and to show (as it can be shown) that the identity of contract and sacrament was implicit in Christian practice from the earliest times. But I will instance, as affording a striking proof of the Church's belief, her attitude throughout the Middle Ages to what were termed clandestine marriages: marriages contracted not, as Canon Law prescribed, *in facie Ecclesiae*, but by a mere plighting of troth between the parties, without ecclesiastical ceremony of any kind. Such marriages, as you are aware, are still legal in Scotland. These were a terrible abuse: they were a frequent source of

seduction, bigamy and other evils. Every effort was made both by the Church and by the civil governments to put a stop to them and to secure that marriages should be conducted in public and by a priest. The Popes issued the most stringent prohibitions against them, and imposed very severe penalties on all concerned. Local synods did the same. To take our own country as an example: in the thirteenth century alone measures were taken against them in the synod of London in 1200, in another held at Oxford in 1212, again at Durham in 1220: by the bishop of Coventry in 1237, of Salisbury in 1256, of Exeter in 1287. Very possibly this list is not exhaustive. Yet the Church never denied that these were true sacramental marriages. When the parties expressed their penitence and were reconciled to the Church, it was never contended that their union could not be regarded as Christian marriage till they had received the Church's blessing.

According to the Church's present legislation marriages by mere consent are no longer possible for Catholics. It is requisite for validity, as you are aware, that the consent shall be given in the presence of the parish priest or his delegate, and of two other witnesses.[1] But on the point with which we are concerned, the teaching of the Church has not varied. The contract and the sacrament are inseparable. Where there is a really valid contract, there the sacrament is also conferred; and where there is no sacrament, there is no marriage. Hence mere civil marriage, no matter how it may be regarded by the State, is for a Catholic no

[1] An exception to this rule is made, when the presence neither of the parish priest nor local Ordinary can be had without grave difficulty. If this state of things is likely to continue for a month, marriage may be validly celebrated simply before two witnesses.

marriage at all. We may quote on this subject some weighty words of Pope Pius IX:—

> "No Catholic is or can be ignorant that Matrimony is one of the seven sacraments of the evangelical law, instituted as such by Christ our Lord, and that for that reason there can be no marriage between Catholics which is not at the same time a sacrament: and that in consequence any other union of man and woman among Christians, save that which is a sacrament, no matter by what civil law it is effected, is nothing else than shameful and soul-destroying concubinage, which the Church vehemently condemns; and further that the sacrament can never be separated from the bond of marriage, and that it belongs wholly to the Church's authority to determine all that in any way appertains to such marriage."[1]

The third point with which I wish to deal is the Church's doctrine of the indissolubility of marriage. This too, unhappily, is a question of present-day importance. Until 1857 divorce was practically impossible in England. It could only be obtained by private act of parliament—a process so expensive as to be out of the reach of the ordinary citizen. In that year the divorce court was instituted: and slowly but surely the dissolution of marriage has become more and more frequent. This is more especially the case in the higher walks of society. But it is hotly contended by persons of political eminence that the same privilege—a strange misapplication of the term—should be within the reach of the poor: and there is every reason to anticipate that the evil will become more and more preva-

[1] Allocution *Acerbissimum vobiscum*, 27, Sept. 1852 (Denzinger, 1640).

lent, and marriage will soon lose its claim to be regarded as a lifelong association. Far from being a bond stronger and closer even than the parental tie, it will be an experimental partnership which can be terminated without difficulty if the parties weary of it. The Catholic Church alone offers a firm resistance to the process of disintegration. She declares that in this matter human laws are wholly without force: that Jesus Christ Himself proclaimed the absolute indissolubility of marriage: that such was marriage when God instituted it for our first parents, and that our Lord in express terms renewed that primal law: that even the Pope, the vicar of Christ, has no power to dissolve a consummated Christian marriage. This has been the unchanging teaching of the Church from the days of the Apostles. The successors of St. Peter have upheld this rule through good report and evil report, maintaining it against the corruption of pagan Rome, the license of the northern barbarians, the caprice of medieval kings. In the sixteenth century, as we well know, the Pope thought it better to allow England to fall away from Catholic unity, than to betray his trust in regard to this divine law.

We are sometimes told that the teaching of the New Testament is not clear on the subject: that our Lord's words are ambiguous, and may equally well be understood as permitting divorce when one of the partners has been guilty of adultery. This cannot be admitted. There are five New Testament passages which deal with the matter, *Mt.* v, 31, 32; xix, 3-12; *Mk.* x, 2-12; *Lk.* xvi, 18; and *I Cor.* vii, 10, 11, where St. Paul tells us that he is giving a rule laid down by Christ Himself. Four of these passages leave no room for any doubt as to their meaning. Divorce is altogether forbidden,

and marriage is declared absolutely indissoluble. In case of unfaithfulness to the marriage vow, the innocent partner may break off all relations with the guilty, and may separate from her for good and all; but even here the bond is not severed. The fifth passage, however, provides a difficulty. In *Mt.* xix, 9, our Lord says: "I say to you: whoever puts away his wife, except for fornication, and marries another, he commits adultery."[1]

Here the words, viewed out of their context, are, it may be owned, ambiguous. But common sense bids us explain the one obscure passage by the four which are clear. What could be more unreasonable than to interpret the doubtful passage in a sense contrary to that of those whose meaning is plain? And there is more to be said than this. The context in which the verse occurs imperatively requires that it should be understood as an absolute prohibition of all divorce. In the first place, we are told that the Pharisees put the question with the design of entrapping our Lord. They desired to show that His teaching was in conflict with the law of Moses. This supposes that they were aware that He taught the absolute indissolubility of marriage, and believed that on this point they could secure their object without difficulty. If He really allowed divorce for adultery there would have been no room for a trap of any kind. He would have been in full agreement with one of the great Jewish schools—that of Shammai—

[1] It is certainly strange that our Lord's reply should have been given in a form so liable to misinterpretation. Can any explanation, it may be asked, be offered? We can, of course, do no more than suggest a possible solution to the difficulty. But it seems a reasonable hypothesis that St. Matthew has given us an abbreviated account of the conversation. It may be supposed that our Lord set forth in separate statements, perhaps in answer to separate questions, the indissolubility of marriage, and the right to dismiss an unfaithful partner: and that the obscurity is due to the evangelist having compressed these into a single sentence.

which interpreted the law of Deuteronomy in this sense. Such teaching would have actually enlisted the support of some of His hearers. It is idle to say, as some have done, that the purpose of the question was to force Him to adopt one interpretation of the law or the other, so that He should incur the enmity of the school with which He disagreed. The whole party of the Pharisees were already openly hostile to Him. Neither Hillel's disciples nor Shammai's needed to be spurred to opposition. What was desired was to force Him into apparent contradiction with the Mosaic law. Furthermore, in His immediate reply, He does not answer by commending the stricter views of Shammai: He passes over the law of *Deuteronomy* on divorce altogether, and makes appeal to the Divine institution of Matrimony, and shows from that source that marriage is indissoluble.

> "Have ye not read that He who made man from the beginning made them male and female? and He said: 'For this cause shall a man leave father and mother and shall cleave to his wife: and they two shall be in one flesh.' Therefore now they are not two but one flesh. [Then follows the great summing up:] What therefore God hath joined together let no man put asunder."

There is no possibility of doubt as to His meaning. He pronounces the bond indissoluble. The Pharisees at once make objection from the law of Moses. Our Lord replies that Moses did not approve divorce: he merely tolerated it in view of the low moral development of the Israelites. Then he reiterates the law of indissolubility, but adds that, where the wife has been unfaithful, it is open to the husband to dismiss her

and break off all further relations. The same principle, of course, holds good where the infidelity is on the part of the husband. That such dismissal did not involve any dissolution of the bond He had already explicitly declared in the Sermon on the Mount.

The tradition of the Church affords the very strongest support to our interpretation. Had our Lord permitted divorce for adultery and subsequent remarriage, the early Church could not have been ignorant of the fact. It is altogether impossible to suppose that the Apostles could have forbidden their converts to avail themselves of a liberty granted by Christ Himself. Yet there is no doubt that from the very earliest times remarriage was rigorously prohibited, even where a partner had been dismissed on the score of adultery. A passage in the *Shepherd* of Hermas supplies conclusive evidence on the point. The date of this work is ordinarily given as about the year A.D. 150 We are, however, ourselves inclined to the view cogently defended by Mr. Edmundson in his Bampton Lectures, that Hermas wrote before the end of the first century. Under any circumstances, even if the common opinion be accepted, we are near enough to the Apostolic age to be sure that discipline can have suffered no great change in a matter of such practical moment as this. Now Hermas represents himself as inquiring of the supernatural being whom he terms the Shepherd how a man ought to act if he finds that his wife has been unfaithful to him, and if, instead of showing contrition for the wrong and forsaking it, she persists in it.

"I said unto him: 'What therefore is to be done, if the woman continues on in her sin?' He answered:

'Let her husband put her away and let him continue by himself. But if he shall put away his wife, and marry another, he committeth adultery'" (*Mand. iv*).

The value of this testimony cannot be exaggerated. It was thus that the Roman Church understood the Christian law while the Apostolic tradition was still fresh. Who can doubt that this was the interpretation of Christ's words given to that Church by St. Peter and St. Paul? We could hardly ask for a more decisive argument.

It is indeed often asserted that a different tradition prevailed in the East, and that the Greek Church has always allowed divorce for adultery with the right of remarriage. The statement is entirely misleading. The Greek Church repudiated divorce absolutely until the sixth century. The change came with the legislation of the emperor Justinian. The Eastern bishops lacked courage to enforce ecclesiastical discipline in face of the imperial laws permitting it, and the practice gradually acquired recognition. There is, no doubt, a famous passage in the letters of St. Basil which is adduced by many as proof that already in the fourth century remarriage was allowed. This contention, however, rests on a mistaken interpretation. The letter in question deals not with the Christian law of morals, but with ecclesiastical discipline—with the penances enjoined by the canons for different offences. St. Basil merely says that if a man's wife leaves him, and he proceeds to form a connection with another woman, the penance which the Church imposes, should he seek for reconciliation, is not the tremendous penance enjoined for adultery, but the much less severe penalty

due to immoral conduct in those who are not married.[1] He owns that it is an illogical practice. There is not a word from beginning to end to suggest that the man is not really guilty of adultery or that remarriage is possible.

For five centuries the East no less than the West maintained the absolute indissolubility of marriage. But eventually the Greek bishops failed to resist the pressure of imperial authority, and gave to Caesar the things that were God's. For long they still refrained from giving canonical approval to the system of Justinian. But they dared not excommunicate those who chose to avail themselves of the imperial laws. After the breach with Rome they no longer hesitated to give to divorce full ecclesiastical sanction. The Catholic Church alone has maintained the law of Christ in its integrity, and it will continue to do so to the end of time. The gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

[1] This is the interpretation of Balsamon *in can.* 87, *conc. in Trullo* (Migne, P.G. 137, 809).

# IX

## MATRIMONY (MORAL THEOLOGY)

By the Rev. E. J. Mahoney, D.D.

(i) Moral Theology is that part of theological science which directs and governs the actions of men on their journey towards God, their last end. The accepted distinction between Dogmatic and Moral Theology is, comparatively speaking, a modern one. It is very largely due to the complexity of modern life, and is not found in the works of the great medieval theologians. In the *Summa Theologica* of St. Thomas, *Pars Secunda* could, I suppose, be taken to represent what we now call Moral Theology, since it deals with the movement of the rational creature towards God.

The student of this branch of theology is sometimes immersed in topics which appear, on the surface, to have a purely terrestrial interest; for example, medical ethics, the rights of the state, or the contractual relations between individuals. There would seem to be a gulf of separation between such studies as these and the effort of the human mind to understand something of the nature of the Triune God, the Grace by which we share his nature, the Incarnation and the Holy Eucharist. Yet faith and works cannot be divorced, and the progress of man towards his final blessedness in the vision of God is a gradual perfecting, in which his works and actions are, to a large extent, the measure of

final happiness. Theology is called *Theology* because it has for its object either God or those means by which we reach God. If an inquiry into any one of the various interests of human life is dissociated from God, the terminus of the journey, it ceases to be the inquiry of a theologian and becomes the province of medicine, social economy or jurisprudence.

The life of man, in his passage towards God, is assisted in two ways by God: he is moved internally by grace and directed externally by law. In both these ways, the natural welfare of humanity on this earth is intimately connected with its final happiness in the vision of God. Grace perfects nature, and the eternal law of God finds its expression in all the laws, natural, ecclesiastical and civil, by which the life of man is ruled. Of the way in which grace perfects nature we have an example in the institution of marriage. This natural contract has been raised by Christ to the dignity of a sacrament of the New Law. The sacrament is not an added adornment to the contract; it *is* the contract, and amongst Christians there can be no valid matrimonial contract which is not, at the same time, a sacrament. This has been explained by Father Joyce. Of the grace conferred in this sacrament sufficient has been said in other papers of this volume. The substance of the present chapter will be concerned with elucidating the manner in which Christian Matrimony is brought under the second category of God's assistance to man, namely, Law.

Two reflections must be made, at the outset, without which much of the doctrine will be lacking in force. The first of these concerns the dependence of human happiness on the observance of law. This appears, at first sight, to be a curb and restriction,

something that must be tolerated rather unwillingly, even an enemy to be circumvented and defeated. The reverse is the truth, for law is one of the chief means by which God is leading us to Himself. If we are prepared to say that it is a good thing and part of man's native freedom that he should find his way to Cambridge, without maps and sign-posts and traffic regulations, then it would also be an excellent thing to make the journey of life without the guidance of law. Law is a friend, not an enemy. It is a reasonable ordinance, made and promulgated for the common good by one who has charge of a community. All just law corresponds to this ancient and classical definition.

The second premiss I have to make is this. Laws differ according to the extent and purpose of the community for whose common good they are made. Some are made by the civil government for the good of the state, others by the Church under the authority of Christ, *Rex et Legifer Noster*. But in every case of human legislation, no matter for what community it is framed, the law is bad and unjust if it is at variance with the Natural Law.

By *natural law* we mean that portion of the divine plan which rules the nature of man: it is the participation of the eternal law of God in a rational creature. It belongs to human nature so closely that, if it were changed, we should not be men but some other creation of God. If I say to a man "Live according to your nature and develop harmoniously the powers and resources which God has given you," I am saying to him, in equivalent terms "Obey the natural law which is the law of God." It cannot be changed or altered or abrogated at the will of Pope or King. Men struggle to evade its enactments, but they do so at their

peril. It is a law which can be perceived by the unaided light of natural reason without any special divine revelation. But we are, nevertheless, taught the terms of the natural law, because the human mind, though radically capable of understanding the law of nature, would do so, in the majority of cases, only after much effort and at the risk of many errors. Most of the judgments of the Church concerning the contract, rights, and obligations of marriage are nothing more than the authoritative interpretation of the natural law, solemnly uttered by the teacher divinely appointed by God. It is of the utmost importance to remember this. Time and again people in a position to know better seem to imagine that the Catholic teaching on a subject like birth-control is a law, like fasting and abstinence, made by the Church for her members; that Catholics accept it on a principle of obedience to ecclesiastical authority, and that the Church has the power to change it since she herself has made the law. The truth is, of course, that the Church is merely declaring the natural law.

In the following pages many questions concerning the rights and obligations of married people will have to be omitted, except only so far as they affect the consent to the marriage contract, which, among Christians, is always a sacrament. An examination will be made, firstly, of those elements in the contract which are derived from the natural law; secondly, of those laws which are of ecclesiastical origin; thirdly, of the civil law. Many important questions turn upon this threefold division. The law of nature is antecedent even to the existence of the Church, and no human authority can dispense from it, not even the highest authority of the Church. But from ecclesiastical laws, which are of human origin, the legislator who framed

them can dispense. Civil laws are concerned only with the civil effects of Christian Matrimony, though their tendency is often at variance with the laws of the Church and even, at times, with the natural law itself.

(ii) The primary natural purpose of the union by which man and woman become two in one flesh is the procreation and subsequent rearing of children. Other motives and purposes have their proper place in a consummated action of this kind: the fostering of mutual love and the provision of a natural relief for the imperious instincts of human nature. But these latter purposes are secondary and subordinate. By this we do not mean that the procreation of children always predominates in a person's intention in getting married, or in exercising the rights of marriage. We mean that the realisation of these secondary purposes presupposes and takes for granted certain actions which are, of their nature, fitted for the generation of children. I do not see how this simple fact can possibly be questioned. Normal married intercourse, by its nature, issues in the generation of children, and it is the will of God, the author of nature, that the human race should increase and multiply by this means. Moreover, the human infant naturally requires parental care for many years: the rearing and education of children is necessarily conjoined to the office of bringing them into the world. This is an aspect of the marriage contract that must be continually born in mind. The purpose of marriage is not merely to beget children but to nurture and educate them. It is from this simple design of nature, and therefore of God, that the Church prohibits divorce. There are other weighty reasons, based on the profound signification of Christian marriage, typifying the

union between Christ and the Church, but the chief natural reason is that the complete welfare of children requires that a man should remain permanently and indissolubly united to one wife.

It has been necessary to outline the primary purpose of the marriage union, because the contract from which it springs is made, like any other human contract, by the free consent of the contracting parties, and this consent presupposes a substantially correct understanding of the object of the contract. A person who is ignorant of its purpose, or who intends to undertake a contractual obligation other than that of Matrimony does not validly contract marriage. We are living in times when many views concerning Matrimony are current which are completely at variance with the natural law. People marry with the intention of preventing the generation of children which is the primary purpose of the union. Some marry on the condition that in certain eventualities the union shall be dissolved. Others are already married and attempt a further union. What are these contracts to be called? They are contracts to practice unnatural vice, they are contracts to commit fornication, adultery or polygamy. They may be considered by the parties themselves to be marriage contracts of a sort; they are, doubtless, considered by the world at large to bear sufficient resemblance to marriage to entitle them to be called by that name. But the teaching of the Church is, and always has been, adamant. They may be called anything you like, but *de facto* they are not Christian marriage. They may have been contracted with all the solemnity of external religious rites, in a Catholic Church, in Westminster Cathedral, in the Vatican, with Cardinal Gasparri or the Pope to bless the union, but if the primary purpose

of the contract or its essential properties are excluded, there is no marriage contract. In a matter of this kind, the flaw in the consent may not be sufficiently substantial to affect the validity of the contract. Certain cases of defective consent, arising from ignorance or immoral conditions, are on the border-line, and need a careful judicial inquiry before it can be said that the marriage contract was not made. It would be idle for anyone who is not a professional theologian or canonist to come to any decision in such matters. It is for the purpose of sifting the evidence in these cases that matrimonial tribunals exist in most dioceses.[1]

There is a further element in the consent, in addition to a proper intention concerning the object of the contract. The consent must be freely given. In every human contract grave fear unjustly incurred is held to constitute a valid ground for rescinding an agreement. But the contract of Matrimony is unique amongst human agreements: it is by its nature indissoluble and cannot be rescinded. The authority of the Church has, therefore, intervened and has determined that violence and grave fear unjustly incurred shall render the marriage contract invalid. This intervention is, in great part, an official interpretation and a safeguarding of the natural law itself. The prominence given to certain cases of nullity, on these grounds, has introduced a certain suspicion that the Church interprets too widely the notion of fear. But anyone who honestly reflects on the situation will recognise the justice of our matrimonial practice. It is precisely because the marriage

[1] *A fortiori* a person who is physically incapable of exercising the rights of marriage cannot make a contract concerning those rights. Impotence which is antecedent to marriage and permanent, whether in the man or in the woman, whether known to the other party or not, whether absolute or relative, invalidates the contract by the natural law.

contract is permanent and indissoluble, that the same authority which declares marriage to be indissoluble secures also, by appropriate legislation, that the consent shall be perfectly free under pain of nullity. The same reason has given rise to many of the ecclesiastical laws and impediments which we are going to consider. They are laws from which one can be dispensed for adequate reasons. But a consent which is defective, owing to ignorance, error or fear, within the limits of the natural law interpreted by the Church, cannot be supplied by a human authority. Such defects can be healed only if the parties concerned give a fresh and valid consent to the marriage contract. If they refuse to do this their attempted marriage must remain invalid.

(iii) Leaving now the marriage contract, as deduced from the natural law, we have to consider some of the more important enactments which have been made by the authority of the Church. The non-observance of some of these laws has the effect of invalidating the contract, in which case the sacrament is not received, since the contract is the sacrament; if the contract is invalid there can be no sacrament. But only the graver laws have this voiding effect. The rest bind under pain of sin, perhaps of grave sin, but the contract is valid and the sacrament received, even when the law is purposely evaded. The distinction between "validity" and "lawfulness" of actions enters much more closely into Canon Law than it does in most civil codes, and it is absolutely necessary that the point should be understood. It is owing to the fact that the sacrament of Matrimony is a contract, and a contract of a most important social character, that the Church has safeguarded the recep-

tion of this sacrament with rather intricate legislation, whose non-observance may render the act sometimes invalid, sometimes merely unlawful. These laws are not mere formalities. They are made in order to establish with certainty the existence of the contract and to protect the sanctity of Matrimony—exactly as the State requires, under pain of nullity, the observance of certain laws at the time the more important civil contracts are made. We shall confine our attention to the marriage laws which must be observed in order to secure the *validity* of the contract.

Of these laws, the most important, because of their universal application to every contemplated marriage, are those which must be observed at the time the contract is actually made. Every Catholic understands that marriage should take place before a priest, and it is sometimes thought that the priest is required because he is the minister of the sacrament. This would be an erroneous conclusion to draw. A little reflection will show that, if the contract is the sacrament, it is the contracting parties who administer it. For the gravest reasons the Church has required, from the earliest times, the presence of a priest at the marriage contracts of Christians, but up to the time of the Council of Trent this law was not enforced under pain of nullity. Marriages contracted without the presence of a priest were usually secret unions and were attended by a number of abuses. In order to remove these evils, the Fathers of the Council of Trent, in the famous *Tametsi* decree, declared that these clandestine marriages were thenceforth invalid. England, and many other places, were excluded from the terms of this decree until the time of Pius X. The *Ne Temere* decree of this great Pontiff revised and simplified the legislation of the

Council of Trent, and made its observance obligatory on all Catholics throughout the world, from Easter 1908. For the marriage contract to be valid, the consent of the parties must be asked and received, in the presence of two witnesses, by the parish priest or Ordinary of the place, or by their delegate. The Ordinary is generally the bishop of a diocese, and the parish priest is, for practical purposes, the senior priest in charge of a mission. A few exceptions to this law, providing for the validity of marriage without the presence of a priest, are very clearly defined. But the very big exception, to which express reference must be made, concerns the marriages of non-Catholics when contracting among themselves. They are not bound to the observance of this law at all, and if they are baptised and free to marry on other grounds, their marriages are most certainly valid and most certainly sacraments. They differ from the marriages of Catholics only in the fact that the nuptial blessing is not received. When they are reconciled to the Church this blessing may be given, but there is never anything resembling a repetition of the sacrament of Matrimony, even conditionally, for their former marriage has fulfilled all the requirements of the Church.

In addition to these laws regulating the form of the contract, whose non-observance used to be known as the impediment of clandestinity, there are a certain number of other impediments which render the contract invalid by ecclesiastical law. In many cases these impediments exist in order to protect the natural contract, and quite a good example of this is the determination of the age limit. This is fixed at the age of sixteen for the male and fourteen for the female. Should this age appear to be rather young it must be remem-

bered that the law is made for the whole world, and in many parts the validity of marriage is recognised even at the age of puberty. It is also the law of the Church, though not of an invalidating effect, that the age limit customary in the district should be observed, and that parental consent should be obtained. These provisions secure that the normal age for marriage, in these parts, far exceeds the limits determined for the validity of the contract.

Other diriment impediments, of purely ecclesiastical origin, are a logical consequence of many points of Catholic discipline, deeply rooted in the teaching of Christ and the practice of the Church. The celibacy of the clergy has been, for many centuries, the established Canon Law of the West. The reason for it is based on the teaching of Christ and St. Paul concerning the blessedness of virginity. By not marrying, the clergy are more likely to devote themselves entirely to the things of God, and attain more securely the perfection demanded by their state of life. The legislation, framed for the purpose of securing that the clergy should not marry, gradually assumed the form of making Holy Orders a diriment impediment to marriage. In a similar manner solemn religious profession renders subsequent marriage invalid.

The sanctity of marriage, as typifying the supernatural union between Christ and the Church, is reflected in the law which invalidates marriage between a Catholic and an unbaptised person, for example, a Jew.[1]

Intimately connected, also, with the sanctity of

[1] This diriment impediment must be completely distinguished from that of mixed religion, which prohibits marriage between a Catholic and a baptised non-Catholic and is a good example of an impediment which has not the effect of invalidating the contract.

marriage and the fidelity it demands, there exists an impediment known as *crime*, which invalidates marriage between persons who have committed adultery with a promise of marriage, adultery being understood in the strict sense of a consummated sin committed by a married person with someone else; the impediment includes those who have caused, or conspired to cause, the death of their lawful partner.

But, perhaps, the commonest form of impediment is that arising, in various ways, from relationship. With the space at our disposal, it is impossible to do more than mention each one. *Consanguinity*, which is the bond uniting persons of the same blood, invalidates marriage between kindred in the direct line and to the third degree in the collateral line, for example, in ecclesiastical reckoning, between the children of cousins. *Affinity* is the relationship existing between a married person and the blood relations of his or her partner, and invalidates marriage in all degrees of the direct line and to the second degree in the collateral line. The similar relationship arising from an irregular union of persons invalidly married extends only to the second degree of the direct line. A certain degree of relationship is established by *legal adoption*, and the Church sanctions and recognises whatever civil law may be existing in the locality. Lastly, the very ancient impediment of *spiritual relationship* renders marriage invalid between the minister of Baptism and the person baptised, and between the baptised person and the godparent.

A word with regard to all these impediments. It is frequently suggested that the Church multiplies impediments, in order to have at hand a legal excuse for declarations of nullity, which are, in effect, legalised

divorce under another name. To begin with, none of these impediments are merely legal formalism. They all have an intimate connection with the sanctity of marriage or with other established Christian doctrines. Moreover, the number has been very considerably lessened under the legislation of the Code, for example, the degrees of relationship are reduced. With all the care surrounding the solemnisation of marriage a diriment impediment, if it exists, should be easily detected. Unlike those which are connected with the natural law, every ecclesiastical impediment *can* be met by dispensation. *De facto*, owing to the gravity of the issue, the Church does not dispense in certain cases, for example, in the impediment arising from the priesthood. In nearly every case of an impediment being detected after the marriage has been attempted, a dispensation will be forthcoming and the contract validated. But, if the parties do not wish to validate their invalid union, or if it is an impediment from which the Church will not dispense, nothing remains but for the Church, after a careful survey of the evidence, to issue a declaration that the marriage is invalid. To call this a divorce is a misuse of language, for a divorce pretends to dissolve the bond of a valid and consummated marriage, and this no power on earth can do.

(iv) If we now examine the rights of the State in the question of matrimonial laws, the position is simple. Non-baptised persons are not subjects of the Church, and their marriages, when contracting among themselves, are regulated by the civil law, provided it is not at variance with the natural law of God. But no civil authority has the power of controlling the substance of the marriage contract of Christians, because it is a

sacrament. With regard to the civil effects of such unions, e.g., the disposition of property and the civil rights of married persons, the State not only can but must legislate, and this prerogative is not questioned by the Church. It is, consequently, the duty of the State to supervise the form and registration of the contract with a view to stabilising the civil effects of the union. In many places the parish priest is recognised by the State as fulfilling the functions of a civil registrar; in other places, the registrar is a civil official. All these laws are just, and should, even in conscience, be observed. Otherwise there would be a quite unnecessary conflict between civil and ecclesiastical law, and a marriage would be valid though denied its civil status as such. Occasionally, as in this country under the Act of 1837, the civil law is unjust. Catholics were required to appear before a Church-of-England clergyman, in order that their unions should be recognised as marriages by the law of the country. Many expedients were resorted to by our harassed forefathers in order to avoid performing a religious rite before an heretical minister. The tradition of the London district is that the clergy instructed the faithful to withhold internal matrimonial consent when appearing before the parson. Anyone who appreciates the doctrine that consent to the contract is the sacrament will perceive at once that this offered a rather adroit method of escape.

Looking forward to the future, we see the possibilities of a conflict between Church and State in the proposals made by eugenists to forbid marriage to persons suffering from hereditary diseases, bodily or mental, which might be transmitted to their offspring. The possible conflict with the Church would arise from the fact that such laws are a restriction of human liberty and deny

men and women the exercise of their natural rights. I have said that, in this matter, there exist the germs of a *possible* conflict, for the whole weight of Church authority would be on the side of individual liberty. The State exists for the individual, not *vice versa*. Yet, it must be said that there is no radical objection to such proposals, should they be demonstrated as necessary for the common good, no matter how jealously we are prepared to defend the rights of individuals against the growing pretensions of the State. The Church has never denied to the State the power of compelling even married men to forego the exercise of their rights, for the common good, in defending their country during a just war. If adequate proofs were forthcoming, one could admit, without sacrificing any principle, that physical and mental degeneracy was becoming a social menace of such magnitude that it was the duty of the State to intervene. Such laws of the State could be recognised by Canon Law, in much the same way as civil adoption is *de facto* recognised at the moment. Nor would it mean introducing any very novel principle for the Church to forbid marriage for the common good. There has always existed an impediment, of a very general and elastic character, known as "prohibition of the Church" which can be used by ecclesiastical authority to forbid marriages which appear to be hostile to the common good. A reasonable and well safeguarded eugenic law could easily be regarded as being of this category.

In conclusion, we may return to the point from which we began. All just law is a friend, not an enemy. For grave and proportionate reasons, the Church is prepared to dispense individuals from observing certain

ecclesiastical laws. But the inclination of any Catholic contemplating a marriage forbidden by the laws of the Church should be to keep the law rather than to seek dispensation, for its observance will undoubtedly be to his ultimate good; it is made by the Church, in the name of Christ, to guide our steps to God.

Portraying and typifying the union between the Son of God and our humanity, the sacrament of Matrimony is part of God's design in raising men to the dignity of the sons of God. Christian parents co-operate in this sublime and lofty purpose, and their union, "for better for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health," is supported and strengthened by Christ, who bore the infirmities of men and shared their griefs. Should the laws of the Church, and perhaps the natural law, appear sometimes difficult to observe, the grace of this sacrament will make what is bitter sweet and easy. And even should the natural love between the partners in this sacrament grow weak and threaten to disappear, then, at the command of Christ present at the nuptials, the new wine of divine charity will take its place, surpassing the old in sweetness.

# X

## EXTREME UNCTION

By the Rev. L. Geddes, S.J., D.D.

No more admirable summary of the Church's teaching on the sacrament of Extreme Unction can be found than the canons of the Council of Trent. The first of those canons which deals with this sacrament reads as follows: "If anyone says that Extreme Unction is not truly and strictly (*proprie*) a sacrament, instituted by Christ our Lord, and promulgated by the blessed Apostle James, but merely a rite accepted from the Fathers, or a human invention: let him be anathema." And the second: "If anyone says that the sacred unction of the sick does not confer grace, or remit sin, or comfort (*alleviare*) the sick, but that it has now ceased to exist as though it had been, merely of old time, a grace of healing: let him be anathema."

The existence in the Church from Apostolic times onward of the rite of anointing the sick is a fact that cannot be called in question. In the first of the canons the Council rejects the theories that would assign to this rite a merely human origin and value. In the second it rejects also the theory that it is a remnant of one of those charismatic gifts which certainly existed in the Apostolic Church, and to which St. Paul refers in, for instance, *I Cor.* xii: "Are all workers of miracles? Have all the grace of healing? Do all speak with

tongues? Do all interpret? But be zealous for the better gifts." The Council states the true origin and nature of the rite. It is a sacrament in the strict sense, instituted by Christ, conferring on the sick grace, remission of sins, and comfort of soul.

By the voice of Trent the infallible Church has spoken. But the Fathers of that Council were not the recipients of a new revelation. They themselves could only define as Catholic faith what they could prove to be contained in the revelation given once for all to the Apostles. When we come to inquire into the grounds of their certainty we are met by a difficulty. There are two sources from which that revelation can be known, the Scripture—the written word of God—and the oral tradition of the Church. In Scripture there is only one passage which refers to the Christian rite of anointing the sick, the famous passage in *James* v, and it is not overwhelmingly clear that St. James is there speaking of a sacrament in the strict sense distinct from the sacrament of Penance. When we come to Tradition we have no clear catena of quotations from the Church's accredited witnesses, showing belief in the doctrine as existing from the age of the Apostles continuously until the Council of Trent. From the whole of the Patristic age there are not more than a dozen references to the rite, and even in these there are very few passages which would show with certainty that it was regarded as a true sacrament. There could not be any hope of finding passages in which the word *sacrament* was used in our present-day sense of the rite; that word was not used as the common and exclusive designation of all the seven sacraments until the twelfth century. What one would look for would be an indication that it was regarded as giving sanctifying grace by its own power;

that it was a means of grace separate from the sacrament of Penance, for instance; and that is just what it is so difficult to find.

In the eighth and ninth centuries, however, the mind of the Church comes more clearly into view. All classes of documents, liturgical, disciplinary and dogmatic, can be cited as witnesses. And in the period that follows, the Scholastic age, there is no doubt as to the doctrine universally held. The rite of anointing the sick referred to by St. James is everywhere recognised as a true sacrament; a rite instituted by Christ, signifying supernatural grace, and conferring grace of its own power.

From the beginning of this post-Patristic period, the early eighth century, three English witnesses may be mentioned. In the "Sacerdotal Law" of Egbert, Archbishop of York, Penance, Unction and Eucharist are the subjects of successive canons, and are clearly regarded as all falling within the same category:

> "Let all priests impose on all who confess their sins to them a fitting penance, and let them mercifully grant to all sick before they depart from life viaticum and the communion of the body of Christ." [No. 20].
>
> "According to the laws laid down by the holy Fathers, if any one is sick let him be carefully anointed by the priests with consecrated oil, along with prayer" [No. 21].
>
> "Let the priest always have the Eucharist ready for the sick, lest they die without Communion" [No. 22].[1]

St. Boniface, another Englishman, left his native

[1] Migne. P.L. 89, 382.

land to become the Apostle of Germany. He was responsible for the statutes of the Synod of Liptina, in which again we find Unction classed with undisputed sacraments, in this case Baptism and the Eucharist. *Statute IV* reads: "Let not priests journey anywhere without the holy chrism, the consecrated oil, and the saving Eucharist. But wherever they are called upon, even unexpectedly (*fortuito*) let them be found at once prepared to perform their office in rendering what is due."[1] Lastly we may quote the great light of the Saxon Church, St. Bede, surnamed the Venerable. In his commentary on *Mark* vi, 13, he quotes the passage from St. James, and continues "Hence it is clear that this custom of Holy Church, that the possessed or any who are sick be anointed with oil, consecrated by pontifical benediction, was delivered to the Church by the Apostles themselves."[2] In his commentary on St. James he speaks more at length, and connects with the rite the effects of healing and remission of sins, though he makes confession of sin a condition for the latter.[3] Also, following Pope St. Innocent I, he says that "not merely the priests but all the faithful may use the oil in their own necessity or that of members of their household, though the oil can be blessed (*confici*) only by bishops."[4] This seems to indicate the existence of a non-sacramental use of the holy oil in addition to the sacramental use. There seems to have been a somewhat similar non-sacramental use of the Eucharist itself.[5]

[1] Migne. P.L. 89, 821.
[2] Migne P.L. 92, 188.
[3] Migne, p. 93.
[4] Migne p. 93, 39.
[5] Hastings *Dict. of Religion and Ethics*, vol. 5, p. 672, art. *Extreme Unction*, by Fr. Thurston.

These testimonies from English writers of the early eighth century could be paralleled from the whole of Christendom throughout the eighth and ninth centuries; while for the succeeding period, i.e., from the tenth century onwards, there can be no dispute about the faith of the whole Church. There is no need to quote passages from western theologians. It is a commonplace that all the great Latin Schoolmen agree as to Extreme Unction having all the marks of a sacrament of the new law. It is sufficient to mention the names of the leaders—Albertus Magnus, St. Bonaventure, St. Thomas, Duns Scotus, Denis the Carthusian, Richardus a Media Villa (Richard Middleton), Capreolus. Even Durandus in this matter is at one with the other leaders of the School. And their doctrine was certainly that of the teaching Church, the college of bishops. For not merely were the bishops men who had been trained in the schools and accepted the doctrines of the schools; as pastors they were responsible for the doctrines that were taught and published in their dioceses, and what was taught was taught with their approval. A unanimity of approved teachers argues therefore a unanimity of approving bishops of the *Ecclesia docens*.

This unanimity was not confined to the west. In the east the same doctrine was held, as is abundantly witnessed, for instance, by the prayers prescribed in the liturgies for the blessing of the oil and for the conferring of Extreme Unction. It is worth while to illustrate this. In the *Euchologion*, the ritual in use from time immemorial in the Greek rite, the prayer said by the first of the seven anointing priests contains the words—

"O Holiest of the holy, who knowest neither begin-

ning nor succession, and who has sent thy Son to heal every disease and every infirmity both of souls and bodies, send forth thy Holy Spirit and sanctify this oil: and make it efficacious for this thy servant to be anointed, unto the perfect freeing of him from sin and the attainment of the birthright of the Kingdom of heaven."[1]

In the ancient rite of the Armenians the seventh priest prayed that the holy oil might be to those who were anointed with it "for the remission of sins, for safety of body and soul in the communion of the Holy Spirit, for the inheriting of the Kingdom of Heaven, for the receiving of grace."[2]

Lastly the prayer for the blessing of the oil in the Jacobite rite reads:

"By thy word, O Lord, bless this oil and through thy mercy heal everyone who is anointed with it; cleanse him and sanctify him, body and soul—and make him inherit the joys of Eden for ever and ever."[3]

These examples are taken from the liturgies. They could be paralleled by extracts from the Greek writers of the time. In fact the Rev. F. W. Puller, in his book *The Anointing of the Sick*, written with the purpose of showing that Extreme Unction, though a holy and commendable rite, is not a sacrament of the new law, does not attempt to deny that in the centuries that preceded the Reformation it was held to be such by both East and West.

It is hardly necessary to point out that in this consent there is an infallible dogmatic proof of the truth of the

[1] Goar, *Euchologium*, pp. 415-6 (Ed. 1647).
[2] Denzinger, *Ritus Orientalium* ii, p. 522 (Ed. 1864).
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 515.

doctrine witnessed to by it. It may not be possible to give what may be called an apologetic proof—to show, that is, historically, by a continuous succession of witnesses from the beginning, that the doctrine that Extreme Unction is a sacrament of Christ was handed down from the Apostles. In fact we can say frankly that it is *not* possible to give an apologetic proof that will preclude all possibility of doubt. There is not enough evidence to go on. But dogmatically it is absolutely certain that the doctrine was so handed down. The Catholic Church has a divine gift by which her judgment is preserved from error when she holds and teaches that a doctrine belongs to the deposit of faith. While those who do not acknowledge the universal jurisdiction of Rome may say that the Fathers of Trent did not constitute the whole teaching Church, but only a branch of it, and so were not infallible judges as to what is contained in the deposit, they cannot, provided they believe in an infallible and indefectible Church at all, say the same of the whole teaching body, East and West: on any showing if such a consent as this were erroneous the whole Church would have failed in the faith. One cannot see, therefore, how a writer of the High Anglican school, for instance, could deny the existence of the sacrament of Extreme Unction without being false to his own principles.

Here, then, we have the main justification of the Tridentine decree; the justification also of the decrees of the earlier Councils, Lyons and Florence, the Councils of reunion between East and West, which also imposed as divinely revealed the doctrine of the sacramental nature of Extreme Unction. The writers of the Scholastic age did not invent the doctrine, the motto of

the School, derived from St. Anselm, was *Fides quaerens intellectum*, "Faith seeking understanding." They did not create, they accepted the faith; and systematically explained, co-ordinated and defended the faith so received. We are not in possession of all the links in the chain by which faith in Extreme Unction reached them, but in virtue of our Lord's promises we know that the faith they taught was that delivered once for all to the Apostles.

We will consider now, briefly, the apologetic proof. It starts with the teaching of Holy Scripture. There is a reference to the anointing of the sick in *Mark* vi, 13, and there is also the well-known passage from *James* (v, 14-16). The unction spoken of by St. Mark—"They (the Apostles) anointed with oil . . . many that were sick, and healed them"—cannot be the Sacrament itself, for the recipients, not being baptised, were not in a position to receive sacraments—though Trent speaks of the sacrament as being suggested (*insinuatum*) by this unction. But the passage in *James*, though not free from obscurity, is decisive, especially in the light of subsequent tradition, as to the main point, namely that the rite is one which confers grace *ex opere operato*.

> "Is anyone sick among you? [or "Someone is sick among you"] Let him bring in the priests of the Church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith shall save the sick man. And the Lord shall raise him up: and if he be in sins they shall be forgiven him. Confess therefore your sins one to another, and pray for one another that you may be healed. For the continual prayer of the just man availeth much."

Here we have the rite—unction and prayer—and the effects which it produces—supernatural effects involving the infusion of grace. That it shall "save the sick man" (*σώσει τὸν κάμνοντα*) and shall "raise him up" (*ἐγερεῖ αὐτόν*),—these effects are to some extent indeterminate. They might, as far as the words go, refer only to the body, though it is improbable that they do. There can be no doubt, however, about the effect next mentioned: "and if he be in sins remission shall be granted to him" (*κἂν ἁμαρτίας ᾖ πεποιηκώς, ἀφεθήσεται αὐτῷ*). This beyond question is an effect in the supernatural order involving the infusion of grace. And it is doing violence to the words of St. James to suggest that it is not due to Unction,that he has suddenly left the effects of that rite and has gone on to something quite different. "The prayer of faith shall save the sick man, *and* the Lord shall raise him up, *and* if he be in sins, remission shall be granted him": the three clauses are knit together and form one whole.

St. James therefore exhorts his readers to use the rite as one which gives grace *ex opere operato*. This is the natural interpretation of his words. But one must own it is not the only possible one. The words that follow at once create a difficulty: "Confess, therefore, your sins to one another and pray for one another that you may be healed. For the prayer of the just man availeth much." After ascribing the forgiveness of sin to unction he also calls on the faithful to confess their sins. And noticd the "therefore": "Confess, therefore, your sins." May he not mean that forgiveness is to be ascribed to confession and the sacrament of Penance? I think one must own that it is a possible interpretation, though not a natural one. So the conclusion seems to be that we can only be absolutely certain that St. James

ascribes the infusion of grace *ex opere operato* to the rite of anointing from the fact that this is the interpretation of his words which the Church has definitely made her own. This is an abundantly sufficient reason. The Bible is the *Church's* book. She is not merely the official guardian, she is also the authentic interpreter of Holy Scripture; and this office of interpretation of Scripture falls within the scope of her infallible *magisterium*.

What, then, did St. James mean when he said "Confess therefore?" It is not easy to follow his thought and one can only offer a tentative explanation. It is possible that he *is* thinking of sacramental confession, or of a confession that might be sacramental. For a person who had sinned grievously the sacrament of Penance, which was in use only for grave sins, would be necessary as well as Extreme Unction, in fact as a preliminary to it. In this case Penance and Extreme Unction would form one whole, the rite of the sick, just as Baptism and Confirmation, though separate rites with distinct effects, were regarded as forming one whole, the rite of initiation. It is very possible therefore that St. James after saying what the presbyters must do—anoint with prayers—considers the faithful themselves, and says "You for your part must confess your sins," that is, for the sacrament of Penance, if it be necessary, and in any case that the priest may know whether it *is* necessary.

In the Scripture, therefore, we find solid, but not overwhelming proof that Extreme Unction is a true sacrament of the new law. Much the same must be said of the second part of the apologetic proof, the aim of which is to show that this doctrine was the unbroken tradition of the Church from the earliest times. For one passage clearly showing belief in the sacramental nature

of Extreme Unction, a dozen could be quoted for Baptism or the Eucharist. Still, there are, in the period from the second to the seventh centuries, continually recurring references to the anointing of the sick, and occasionally one which leaves no doubt as to the belief in its sacramental character. A good example of the latter is a passage in St. John Chrysostom's treatise on the priesthood (iii, 6). He is contrasting the power of the priest with that of our earthly parents. They, he says, give us bodily life, but the priest our eternal life. Again when death lays its hand upon us our parents are powerless to help, but the priest can save unto eternal life. He continues: "For not only when they [priests] regenerate us can they forgive sin, but they can also forgive sins committed after regeneration. For, is there anyone sick among you . . ." and he continues with the quotation from St. James.

But the clearest indication of the doctrine held during this time is an indirect one. At the end of it, from the eighth century on, when we have a body of evidence to judge from, belief in Extreme Unction as a sacrament emerges as we have seen clear and unmistakable, with no single voice raised to denounce this belief as a novelty. This cannot be explained, knowing as we do how tenacious our forbears were of tradition, and how ready to accuse one another of novelty, except by the fact that through those centuries there flowed a steady current of belief in the sacramental nature of Extreme Unction, which does not frequently manifest itself in the writings of the period only because occasion of doing so was rare. For the comparative silence of those early centuries can be sufficiently easily explained. We gather the patristic teaching concerning the sacraments principally from the com-

mentaries of the Fathers on the passages of the New Testament which refer to them, and from sermons delivered upon them. But all the commentaries by the Fathers on *James* have perished. The earliest that survives is that of Bede, and, as we have seen, he does understand St. James's words of the sacrament of Extreme Unction. As to sermons on Extreme Unction, they are rare enough now, nor would they have been more frequent then. There were no occasions demanding them, whereas there was abundance of occasions for sermons on other sacraments. Baptisms, Confirmations, Ordinations, were all regularly recurring events in the Church's year; the administration of the sacrament of Penance was marked by the public reconciliation of the penitents. All these, therefore, were natural occasions of public explanation and exhortation. None of this is true of Extreme Unction. There was nothing to mark it in the public life of the Church; there was no period of preparation leading up to it; and it was, moreover, probably much less frequent than in later days—its reception would be generally impossible in the case, for instance, of a Christian living in a pagan household. Another reason for the lack of clear reference to it is that not till much later were the sacraments grouped under a common concept with a common name and recognised as seven in number. It took some time for Christian thought to become quite clear on the fact that Extreme Unction was what we may call a sacrament in its own right, and not merely a special development of the sacrament of Penance as administered to the dying.

So the paucity of reference to Extreme Unction before the eighth century can be satisfactorily explained while the references that have survived, coupled with

the emergent certitude of the eighth and succeeding centuries are a certain indication of a belief, held continuously from the beginning, in a sacrament strictly so called.

To conclude, therefore, this section dealing with the reality of the sacrament of Extreme Unction we may say that while the dogmatic proof admits of no question in the mind of anyone who believes in an infallible Church, the apologetic proof, though not overwhelming, is so solid that it ought to be convincing to any mind that is open to conviction.

There remain to be considered certain points concerning the nature and effects of the sacrament. About some of these also there has been controversy, but it has been controversy among Catholic theologians themselves rather than between Catholic and Protestants, and it has been concerned much more with the manner of stating the known truth than with vital points of doctrine themselves.

First there is the question of the sacramental rite. What is necessary by way of matter and form? Here we find the greatest variations, even in what is regarded as necessary for validity. It is difficult to explain them without recourse to the doctrine held by an increasing number of theologians, that the Church has real power to determine the matter and form of some of the sacraments. To consider some of the variations in detail, there is first the question of the remote matter. There is universal agreement that this must be oil, and moreover that it must be blessed. But blessed by whom? In the Latin Church by a bishop, or a priest specially empowered to do this by the Holy See. Otherwise the sacrament is invalid.[1] But in certain at least of the

[1] Codex Juris Canonici, 945.

Eastern Churches, both uniate and non-uniate, the oil is blessed by simple priests; this practice goes back to remote ages, and never led to the validity of the sacrament as conferred by them being called in question by the Latins.

Again in the rite itself there have been, and still are, great divergencies. In the Latin Church one priest administers the sacrament. In the Eastern Churches the usual number of ministers is seven, and some Eastern writers—for instance Simeon of Thessalonia[1]—hold that one priest is not sufficient for validity, appealing (as did Luther) to the words of St. James, "Let him bring in the priests of the Church." Regarding the number of unctions, Bellarmine writes: "It is the commoner opinion, followed also by St. Thomas, that only the unctions of the five senses [as opposed to the seven mentioned by the Council of Florence] belong to the essence of the sacrament."[2] And, indeed, all the Schoolmen seem to recognise these five as essential. It would be rash to say they were all mistaken. But Greek rites, both ancient and modern, have been recognised as certainly valid when there have been three unctions or even only one; and while in some cases all the seven priests anoint, in others only the first does so. The Holy Office itself by the decree of 25th April, 1906, and the Code (Can. 947 §1) implicitly recognise one unction as valid at least in case of necessity.

There is no less divergence in the form than in the matter. The present Latin form is *Per istam sanctam unctionem et suam piissimam misericordiam indulgeat tibi Dominus quidquid per visum* (*etc.*) *deliquisti*. This makes mention of unction and remission of sins, but not of

[1] Migne P.G. 155, 515-6.
[2] *De Extrema Unctione*, c.10.

healing. There are many forms quoted by Launoi in his great historical treatise on Extreme Unction which make no mention of unction. The Coptic form given by Bernatus was *Deus te sanet in nomine Patris et Filii et Spiritus sancti*, "May God heal thee, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost": no mention either of unction or of the remission of sins.[1]

The simplest, in fact the almost inevitable, explanation of all these varied requirements is that the matter and form of this sacrament, unlike those for Baptism and the Eucharist, were not fixed in detail by Our Lord who instituted it, but were to a certain extent left to be decided by the Church, and that the Church, by approving of different matters and forms in different times and places, has thereby settled what is valid in those different times and places. Father Kern, who has written the fullest treatise on this sacrament (*De Sacramento Extremae Unctionis*, 1907), does not accept this doctrine, but his explanations are hardly satisfying. As regards the blessing of the oil, for instance, he says that the essence of the sacrament requires that it be blessed by a bishop either in person or through a delegate. But the question at once presents itself, does the delegated power to bless come from the bishop's power of jurisdiction or from his power of Orders? If from the power of jurisdiction, how is it that anyone in episcopal orders always possesses it? And if from the power of Orders how can it be delegated? For the power of Orders is the outcome of the sacramental character, an essentially personal thing. As regards the form again, his conclusion is "The form sufficient for validity of the sacrament of Extreme Unction is any prayer for the sick man, whether formal or virtual."

[1] Denzinger, *Ritus Orientalium*, I, p.187.

If that be taken as meaning that the Church can determine any such prayer to be the form of the sacrament, that would seem to be a reasonable conclusion, but it is hard to believe that a priest could on his own authority say any prayer he liked, and still administer the sacrament validly.

There must next be considered the very important question of the effects of the Sacrament. On this point the teaching of Trent is as follows:

> "The fruit and effect (*res et effectus*) of this sacrament is expressed by these words: 'And the prayer of faith shall save the sick man, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he be in sins they shall be forgiven him.' For this fruit (*res*) is the grace of the Holy Spirit, whose unction wipes away sins, if any remain to be expiated, and the relics (*reliquiae*) of sin, and comforts and strengthens the soul of the sick man by arousing in him a great confidence in the divine goodness; supported by which he bears more lightly the trials and hardships of sickness, resists more easily the temptations of the devil, 'lying in wait for his heel,' and sometimes (*interdum*), when it is of profit for the salvation of his soul, obtains bodily health.'

The effects of the sacrament are therefore fourfold: sins are remitted; the *reliquiae* of sins are extirpated; the soul is comforted and strengthened; sometimes bodily health is regained.

(i) The remission of sins. As the words of the Council are general they cannot be restricted to mean either mortal sin alone or venial sin alone. The sacrament is capable of remitting all sins. *Per se* it should be received in a state of grace; only two sacraments are

recognised as sacraments of the dead, Baptism and Penance. There is consequently an obligation incumbent on one about to receive it, if he be in a state of sin, to put himself in a state of grace by confession or perfect contrition. But if he, without fault of his own, omit that—if, for instance, he is unconscious, if he mistakenly thinks he has contrition, whereas he has only attrition, or if he is unconscious of his state of mortal sin—then the sacrament does its healing work. Attrition, either actual or habitual, is absolutely necessary as a condition at least for the forgiveness of mortal sin. One writer Hermann Schnell, propounded the thesis that not even this is necessary, but this is clearly against the doctrine of Trent, that repentence (*poenitentia*) is necessary for absolutely all who have fallen into mortal sin, even for those who are about to receive the sacrament of Baptism.[1] By "habitual" attrition is meant that after the last mortal sin an act of attrition has been elicited and not revoked.

Regarding the remission of venial sins there have been various views held by theologians. Some have said that they are forgiven *ipso facto* when the sacrament is validly received, as occurs in Baptism; others hold that only those are forgiven for which there has been, or is, attrition; others again that venial sins are not remitted by the sacrament directly, but only indirectly, in that the sacrament obtains for its recipient the grace to elicit those supernatural acts—love and sorrow —which bring the forgiveness of sin. Nor are these views the only ones held. The opinion which Father Kern defends seems to be altogether in conformity with the teaching of the Schoolmen and the general doctrine of the Church concerning the forgiveness of

[1] Trent, Session 24, c.1.

sin. It is that those venial sins are forgiven immediately for which there has been, or is, attrition; and that, if there be others, the sacrament procures their remission by obtaining the grace of the necessary dispositions. Such dispositions indeed seem to be almost necessarily implied in the effects which Trent ascribes to the "strengthening of the soul," itself an immediate effect of the sacrament. It may be remarked that the sacrament is operative not only at the moment of reception but during the whole subsequent course of the illness, so that it continues to bring about a more and more complete remission of sins.

(ii) The second effect mentioned by Trent is the elimination from the soul of the *reliquiae peccati*, the effects left by sin in the soul after the guilt has been forgiven. We shall consider the healing of one of these "remnants of sin," the spiritual weakening of the soul, under the next heading, the strengthening of the soul. Another such "remnant," perhaps the most important one, is the debt of temporal punishment. That the freeing of the soul from this debt is one of the effects of the sacrament of Extreme Unction is certain not merely because Trent could not teach in general terms that Extreme Unction removed the remnants of sin if it left the chief of them, but also because of what lay behind Trent's teaching. It is the universal teaching of tradition as embodied in the doctrine of the Scholastics that the end and purpose of this sacrament is to make the soul ready for immediate entrance into glory. I will quote only two, but they are representative. St. Thomas in his *Summa Contra Gentiles* teaches that Extreme Unction has for its end to complete the work of purification of one who is about to appear before God by freeing him from the debt of temporal punishment,

"that thus nothing may remain in him which, on the departure of soul from body, could keep him from the possession of glory."[1] The following quotation is from Duns Scotus, the leader of the great rival school:

> "It was fitting that God should ordain some sacrament which should efficaciously and immediately and completely signify in the recipient the final remission of all venial sins which (remission) should be to him the gate of admission to life eternal. And it was fitting that this should be received by the sick when the end is imminent; for then, at the gate of death, the recipient could be freed from sin which would delay his entrance into glory unless it were taken away and blotted out by the virtue of the sacrament. That this was done is clear from the words of St. James. 'Is anyone sick among you, *etc.*' "[2]

Clearly what could delay his entrance into glory is precisely the debt of temporal punishment. Scotus holds, therefore, that the deletion of this is part, at least, of the purpose of the sacrament.

Albert the Great, St. Bonaventure, and a host of other writers, both Eastern and Western, could be cited, all teaching the same doctrine. This agreement is not merely a certain argument in its own right; it also renders it certain that the Fathers of the Council of Trent, when they taught that Extreme Unction purified the soul from the remnants of sin, had in mind particularly the debt of temporal punishment, the one obstacle that could prevent the departing soul from immediately attaining the glory of heaven.

[1] *Contra Gentiles*, iv, 73.
[2] *Reportata Parisiensia*, qu. unic.

This does not mean, however, that all who receive the sacrament with profit are freed from the whole debt of temporal punishment. Neither this effect nor, as we have seen, that of the remission of the guilt of venial sins is necessarily complete. There can be greater or less co-operation with the graces which this sacrament brings in its train, greater or less intensity of the dispositions which render the soul capable of receiving the effect of this as of other sacraments. At the same time it hardly seems consonant with our Lord's goodness to say He has instituted a sacrament with the express end of saving his children from Purgatory, and yet that this full effect, the effect for which He brought the sacrament into being, is not attained except in the case of a very few favoured souls. Surely we can piously hope that the truth lies in the mean between these extremes.

(iii) The third effect is the comforting and strengthening of the soul—*alleviatio et confortatio animae*. In a person who is near to death the exhausted state of the body reacts on the faculties of the soul, intellect, and will. Acts of virtue—resignation, contrition, love of God—become almost beyond the soul's power. It may easily be overwhelmed by terror of death and of the approaching judgment of God. We may expect also that this will be a time of special temptation. Trent in the Preamble says: "Though our adversary seeks and seizes throughout our lives occasions to destroy our souls, still there is no time at which he more strenuously puts forth all the efforts of his cunning to ruin us utterly, and, if he can, to shake our confidence in the divine mercy, than when he sees that the end of life is imminent." One of the fruits, therefore, of this sacrament, the Council teaches, is a certain calm strength

at that critical time. In fact many theologians hold that this is the *effectus principalis* the "master effect" of the sacrament. By this death is robbed of its terrors. The soul is enabled to overcome fears and temptations, and strengthened to elicit those acts of virtue which are of such importance at the supreme moment of life. Anyone who has had experience in the administration of this sacrament—I can appeal to my own as chaplain for some time at a large hospital—can bear witness to its marvellous and visible power in this direction. Clearly those who have received it are inspired by a strength not their own, and face death with a calmness, and even willingness which their previous life would by no means lead one to anticipate.

(iv) The fourth effect is restoration of bodily health. First of all it should be noted that the Council does not co-ordinate this effect with those already considered. It subordinates it to the one last mentioned, the strengthening of the soul, making it one of the effects of this effect. Though in this matter the Council is not formally defining, and has not behind it a *consensus* of theologians, we can still take this expression of the mind of the Fathers as a very strong argument that it is in this way, through the strengthening of the soul, that the sacrament produces bodily healing. Moreover this doctrine provides a satisfactory solution for certain problems which necessarily present themselves in connexion with this effect of the sacrament. For example, in many cases we cannot help recognising that the taking of good natural means without the sacrament would be much more likely to produce recovery than the sacrament without the natural means. An operation, for instance, might effect an almost certain cure, whereas a cure without the

operation would be a miracle, which we have no right to expect. And so if the sacrament were intended *directly* to cause a cure it would look as though God's means were less efficacious than human means. Again, a sacrament produces its effect *ex opere operato;* given the right dispositions in the recipient the effect necessarily follows. But the recipient of Extreme Unction can expect a cure only "sometimes," *interdum*, whatever be his dispositions.

To say that recovery of health is the outcome of the influence of the invigorated soul upon the body seems to provide a satisfactory solution of these problems, and to be in conformity with the teaching of tradition and of the Council. The comforting and strengthening of the soul are produced directly, *ex opere operato*, as the effect of the grace given by the sacrament. Then, so far as the sick person's recovery can be promoted by this state of mind and will, it is so promoted, even, at times to the extent of cure when, without it, cure would have been impossible. In certain cases the soul is powerless against the effects of disease—old age, for instance. But even then the sacrament has done the work proper to it.

It must be noted that this effect of bodily healing is not the gift of God arbitrarily given, still less the merely natural result of a certain state of mind and will. It is an effect supernaturally produced, proceeding *ex opere operato*, though mediately from the sacrament itself, and is the necessary outcome of it according to the recipient's capability of receiving it and his co-operation with the sacramental graces. If, account being taken of the patient's present condition, Almighty God sees that it will be for his spiritual harm, He will not allow this effect to occur. It is in this sense that Trent

adds the words: "if it be of profit for his salvation"; not as implying that the gift is somehow conditioned by man's ultimate destiny, nor that the gift is, *per se*, one given or withheld according to God's good pleasure.

There remains one other point to be considered, that of the *reviviscentia* or revival of the sacrament. As this paper has already exceeded due limits, that must be touched on very briefly. The doctrine of revival is this. It is possible for a sacrament to be received validly but, owing to the obstacle of unrepented sin, unfruitfully, even sacrilegiously. If it is a sacrament that cannot be repeated, does this mean that the recipient is for ever deprived of the grace of it? As we are only considering Extreme Unction it is sufficient to say that it is the almost universal teaching of theologians that, on that obstacle to grace being removed by repentance, the sacrament revives. The sick man then receives through it remission of sins and all the other graces and helps the sacrament is designed to give. Hence it should not be administered—for instance to an unconscious person—under the condition "*si es dispositus*," "if you have the right dispositions." That is done for Penance, as that sacrament is invalid if contrition and purpose of amendment are wanting. But, provided that the recipient has the habitual intention of dying with the sacraments of the Church (and Catholics can normally be presumed to have that) this sacrament is valid. If later the obstacle is removed by an act of contrition or attrition, it will assert itself in all its power, and may well be the means of eternal salvation to the one who received it so unworthily.

To conclude with a few words of practical application: it has been made a reproach against the Roman Church that she has transformed Extreme Unction

from a rite of the sick to a rite of the dying. This indeed is not, and never has been, the Church's intention. Obviously the "sickness" spoken of by St. James needs some defining, and the Church has determined that its meaning is, not any slight indisposition, but sickness that involves real, though not necessarily proximate, danger of death. She has never taught, however, that the sacrament should be postponed till death is imminent. But an abuse undoubtedly exists. For fear of frightening the sick person or for some kindred reason persons responsible for the sick frequently, one might perhaps say commonly, oppose the administration of Extreme Unction until hope of recovery is practically extinct. The result is that the graces which might have been the means of much merit during the whole course of the illness are irretrievably lost. Even the bodily well-being of the patient may suffer grievously by this mistaken kindness. Bodily health is as we have seen sometimes restored by the soul, which, strengthened by the sacrament, comes to the aid of the enfeebled body. It might well occur that if that reinforcement were brought to bear in the earlier stages of an illness it would have a decisive effect which would be beyond the bounds of reasonable possibility when the suffering body had already been brought to the last gasp.

The only safe rule, therefore, is that recourse should be had to this sacrament as soon as it can be validly administered, as soon, that is, as danger of death can be said to exist. For us Our Lord took upon Himself not merely the pains of death, but of death in desolation and dereliction. In Extreme Unction He dispenses to His children the merits that He gained, so as to strengthen and to console them when they, like Him, are faced with infirmity and with death. To have recourse

not grudgingly but eagerly to the treasures dispensed in this sacrament is to show to Him who so hardly won those treasures a part at least of the recognition for which He looks.

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